YOUNG SUNDAY COMICS

おやすみプンプン 7

浅野いにお

YOUNG SUNDAY COMICS

小学館
YSC-0499

Asano Inio ❼ Oyasumi Punpun

YOUNG SUNDAY COMICS

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6巻までのあらすじ

とくになし。

登場人物

小野寺プンプン
小野寺のプンプン。高校三年。

小野寺雄一
プンプンの叔父。

小野寺翠
雄一の妻。

三村雷之進
300年ぶりに復活した伝説の巨人。

Chapter 68

DRIVER,

COULD YOU PLEASE DROP ME OFF HERE?

THAT'S FINE.

YOU'LL HAVE TO WALK QUITE A BIT IF YOU GET OFF HERE.

YOU SURE?

I UHH... NEED TO CALM MYSELF DOWN ANYWAYS...

ミンミンミンミン

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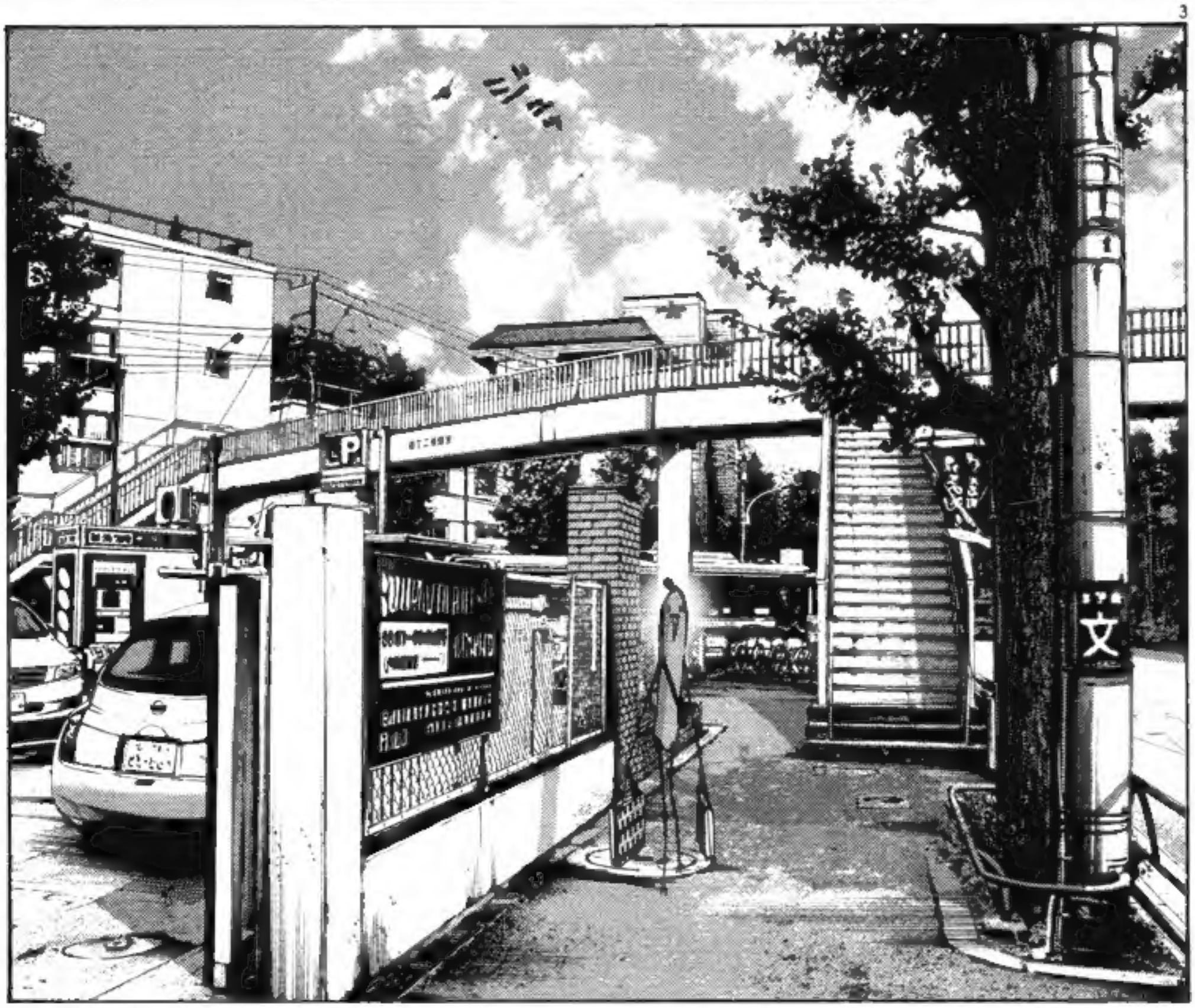


THE AIR WAS FILLED WITH THE CRIES OF CICADAS AND LAUGHTERS OF SCHOOLCHILDREN.

IT WAS A CLEAR AND SUNNY DAY ALL THROUGHOUT JAPAN. AT 37°C, TODAY WAS THE HOTTEST DAY YET THIS SUMMER FOR PUNPUN'S TOWN.

AND ABOVE ALL, HE HATED THIS MOMENT RIGHT NOW.

BUT HE DIDN'T LIKE THE WINTER EITHER BECAUSE IT WAS TOO COLD.

PUNPUN DISLIKED THE SUMMER BECAUSE IT WAS TOO HOT.

HE WAS TOO BUSY GRUMBLING ABOUT THE WEATHER AND THE SEASONS.

EVEN THOUGH HE HAD MANY THINGS HE NEEDED TO THINK ABOUT,

HE MAY NOT SHOW IT ON HIS FACE, BUT I BET HE'S ANGRY...

HE SEEMS SO SULLEN...

IS THAT SO...?

HE DOESN'T LOOK THAT WAY IF YOU ASK ME.

PUNPUN.

6

I WAS WONDERING WHETHER OR NOT TO GIVE IT TO YOU SINCE YOU LOOKED SO WORN OUT BUT...

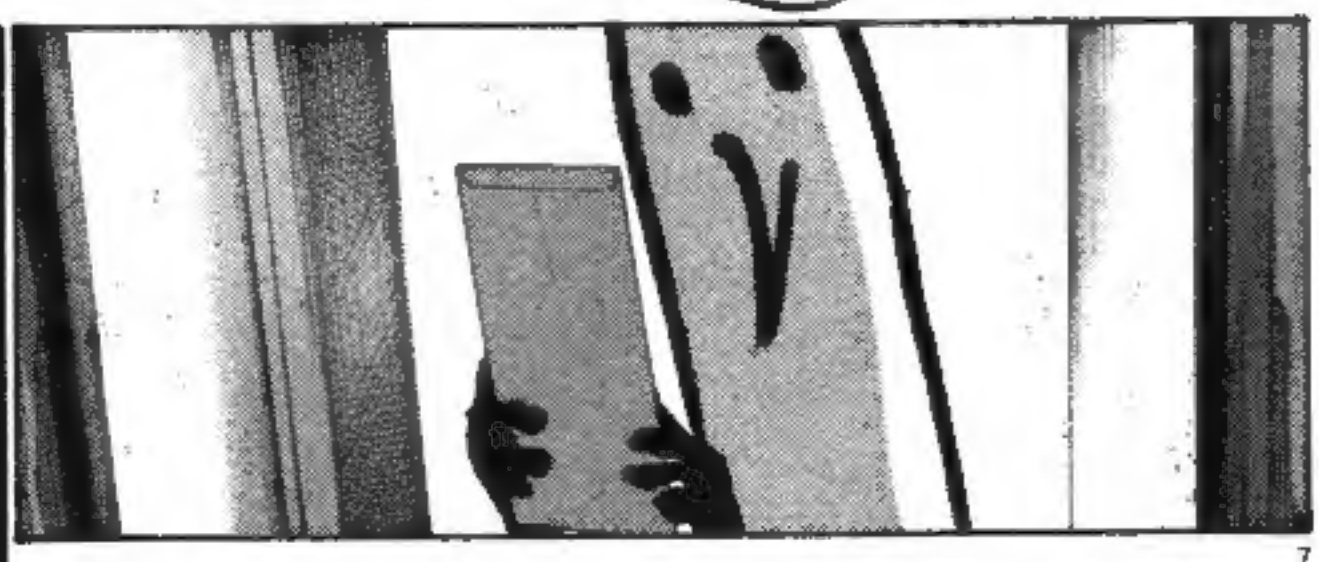
HERE...

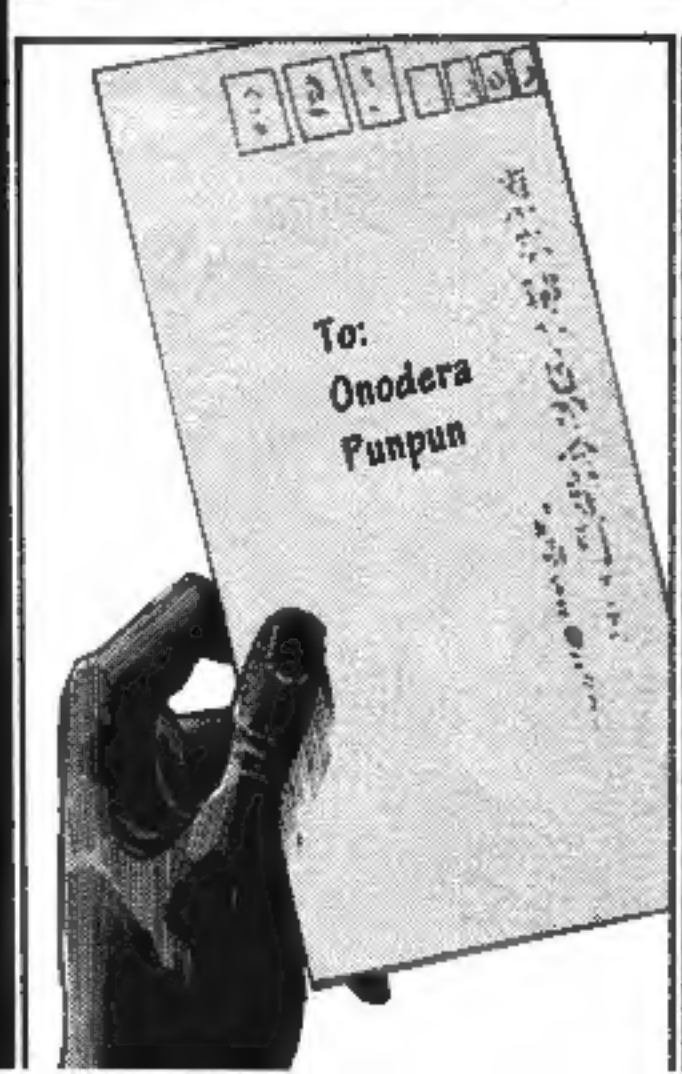
I FOUND THIS LETTER,

INSIDE YOUR MOTHER'S PURSE...

EXCEPT THIS TIME...

THE NAME OF THE SENDER AND THE STAMP WERE MISSING.





IT WAS THE USUAL LETTER FULL OF NONSENSE THAT PUNPUN RECEIVED FROM HIS DAD ONCE EVERY MONTH.

Dear Punpun,

I'm sorry for having lied to you all along. Pretending to be your father and writing you a letter was the only meddlesome thing I could do as your mother.

I hope you can find it in yourself to forgive me.

Love,
Mom

PUNPUN...

WAS THERE REALLY A NEED TO SHOW HIM THAT LETTER...?

...STILL COULDN'T FIND IT IN HIM TO LOVE HIS MOTHER EVEN AT THE VERY END.

AH YES, YES...

FORGIVE ME FOR THE SUDDEN VISIT,

...YES, IT'S ME, PUNYAMA.

I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D BE SHOWING UP TODAY .

I'M SORRY WE DON'T HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO SERVE THAN COFFEE OR TEA...

AHAHA, OH PLEASE, ANYTHING'LL DO!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME AT ALL!

UHM MY NAME IS ACTUALLY ANGUREL
NOT AKANE
BUT WOW YUUICHI, YOU'VE DONE QUITE WELL FOR YOURSELF!
AND I'VE TOLD YOU A LITTLE BEFORE THAT WE'RE MARRIED...
TO THINK YOU'D HAVE A GIRLFRIEND AS CUTE AS AKANE HERE!
YES YOU DID TELL ME BEFORE!
I'M SORRY, MY MEMORY'S BEEN RATHER BAD LATELY
OF COURSE!
A-AH! RIGHT RIGHT RIGHT!

I REALLY AM AMAZED.

WOW,

PUNPUN...

YOU'VE GROWN SO BIG,

WHOO BOY...

AHAHA!

OR IS THAT NOT PHYSICALLY POSSIBLE?

WHAT ARE YOU, LIKE 3 TIMES BIGGER THAN WHEN I LAST SAW YOU!?

WELL, I GUESS I DON'T NEED TO ASK SINCE YOU MUST BE A REAL CHARMER .

WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE, THERE WASN'T A DAY WHEN I WASN'T GETTING IT ON WITH SOME GIRL! AHAHAHA!

SO, UMM. .

HOW'S HIGH SCHOOL?

ANY LUCK WITH THE GIRLS?

AH, YES I'VE QUIT MY JOB AS A NIGHT-GUARD,

BUT AN ACQUAINTANCE OF MINE HELPED ME GET A JOB IN THE SOCIAL SECURITY BUSINESS.

UMM.

MR. PUNYAMA, ARE YOU STILL WORKING IN FUKUSHIMA THESE DAYS?

YOU SHOULD COME VISIT SOMETIMES TOO, AKANE! FUKUSHIMA'S A LOVELY PLACE.

BUT YOU KNOW, THE STARS ARE QUITE BEAUTIFUL OUT IN THE COUNTRY!

STILL, I GUESS I'M JUST SOME OLD MAN LIVING OUT IN THE COUNTRY-SIDE NOW

PUNPU[illegible]
HATED THIS.

PUNPUN KNEW THAT ADULTS HAD THEIR OWN COMPLICATED CIRCUM-STANCES AND REASONS.

HIS DISLIKE DIDN'T REALLY HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT HIS FATHER HAD NEGLECTED HIM FOR YEARS.

YET FOR SOME REASON, PUNPUN COULD NOT FEEL ANY MORE UNCOMFORTABLE.

AND SO, PUNPUN INTENTLY OBSERVED HIS FATHER TO FIGURE OUT THE REASON FOR HIS DISCOMFORT.

HIS FATHER WAS THE SAME AS HE ALWAYS HAD BEEN. HIS APPEARANCE, VOICE, AND ATMOSPHERE HAD HARDLY CHANGED.

STILL THE SAME FUNNY AND KIND FATHER AS BACK THEN...

PUNPUN FIGURED OUT WHAT WAS SO DIFFERENT NOW COMPARED TO BACK THEN.

"...I SEE."

YES, OF COURSE. I'LL HAVE TO MAKE SOME HOT WATER FIRST THOUGH.

AND THE NAME'S MIDORI.

AHA! I CAN'T BELIEVE THOUGHT I WAS IN A COFEE-HOUSE FOR A MOMENT!

I'M REAL SORRY ABOUT THAT, AKEMI. BUT UHM, COULD I HAVE SOME MORE?

IT WAS HIMSELF.

I HAVE WORK TOMORROW IN THE MORNING.

SO I CAN'T STAY HERE FOR VERY LONG BUT

NOW THEN.

UMM...

UMM..

LISTEN, PUNPUN..

MAN, IS IT EVER HOT TODAY!

WHOO..

ALMOST REMINDS ME OF THAT SUMMER

IT...

I WANT YOU TO UNDER-STAND SOME-THING

I KNOW I'M REAL NERVOUS AND STAM-MERING ABOUT WHATEVER COMES INTO MY HEAD RIGHT NOW

BUT THE QUESTION I'M ABOUT TO ASK YOU IS SOMETHING I'VE THOUGHT LONG AND HARD ABOUT

PUNPUN..

WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME LIVE WITH YOUR OLD MAN.

AT FUKUSHIMA?

LET'S START EVERY-THING OVER AGAIN.

FROM THE BEGINNING...

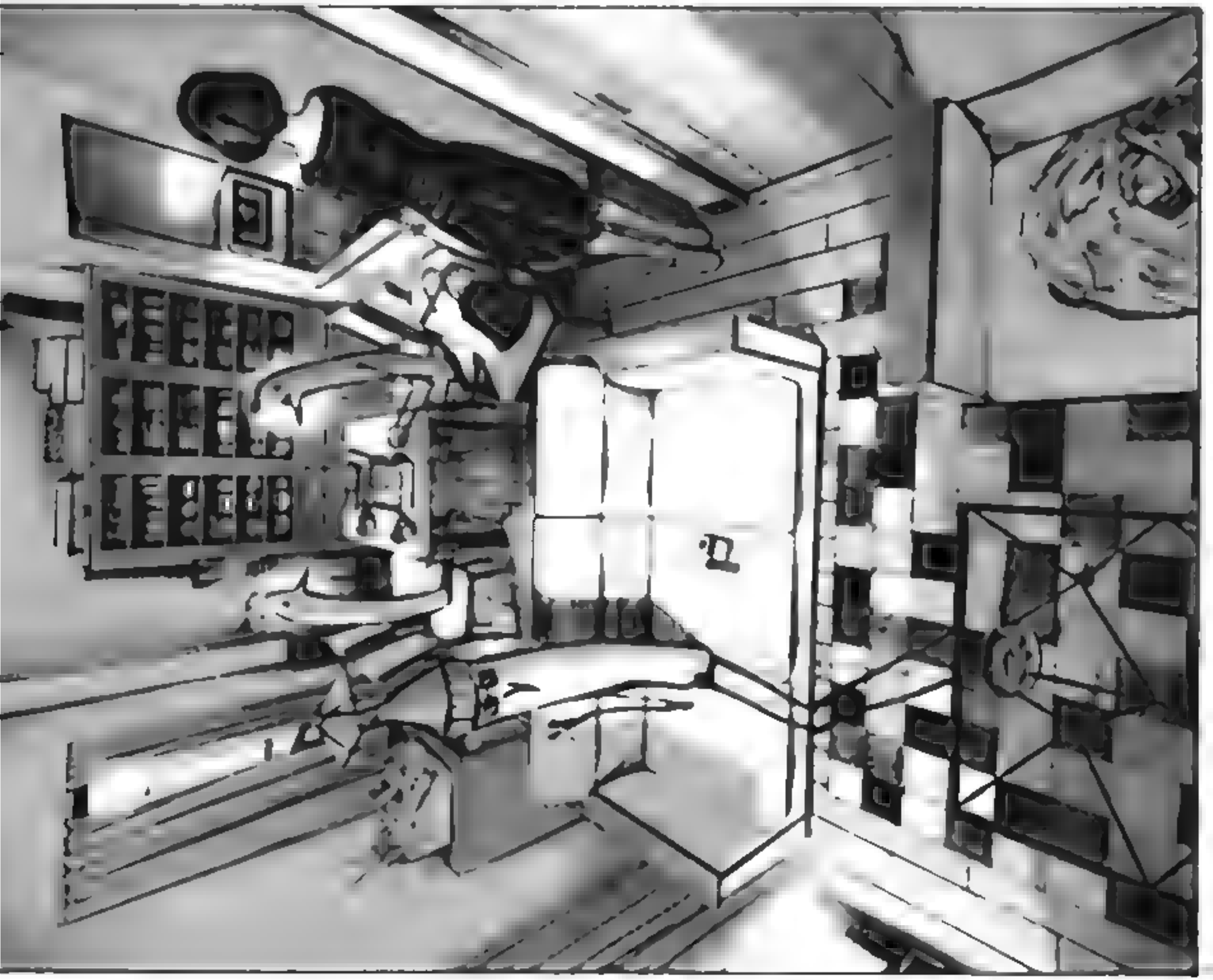
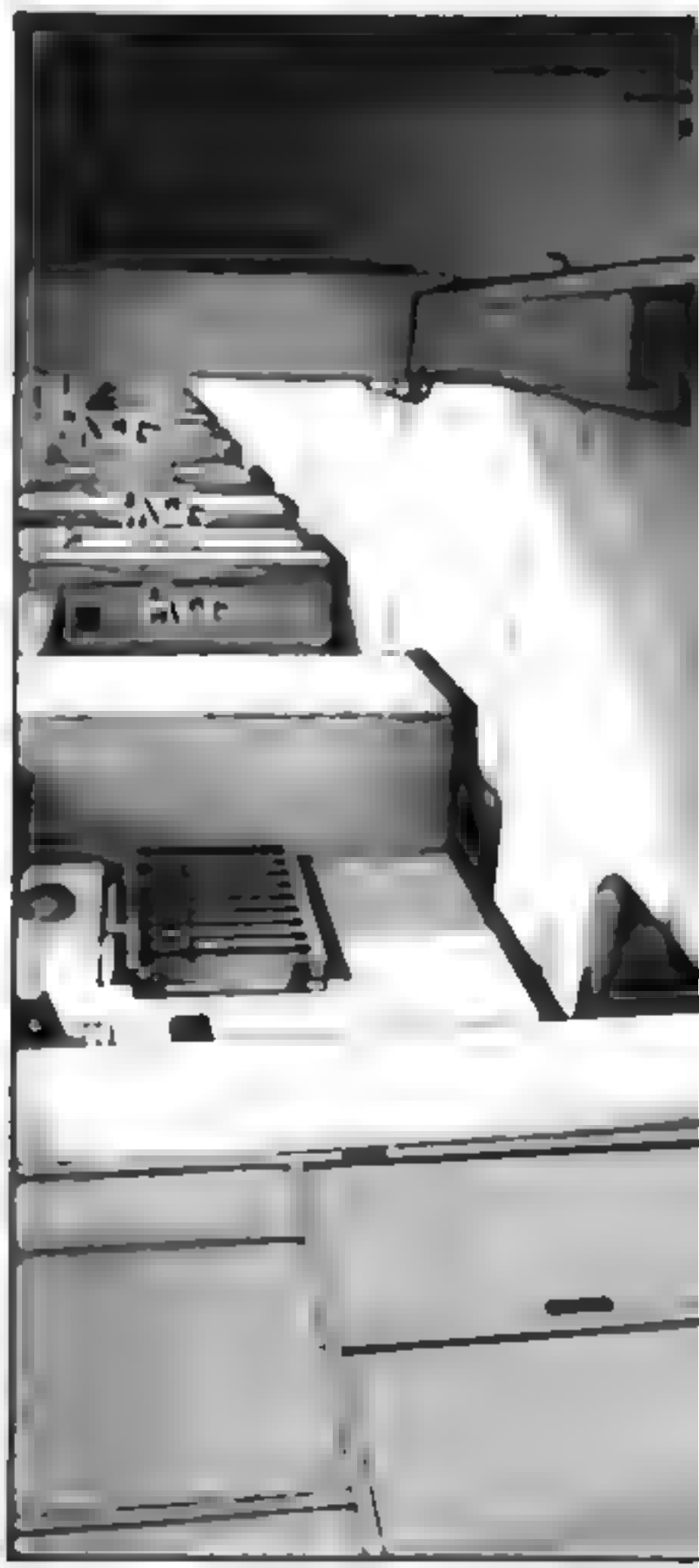
第69話

AFTER ALL,

YOU AND I ALWAYS USED TO GET ALONG WELL, RIGHT?

I DON'T THINK IT'S A BAD IDEA.

AND FUKUSHIMA'S A LOVELY PLACE WHERE YOU CAN TAKE THINGS EASY


PEEEEP
EEEE


START EVERYTHING OVER AGAIN FROM THE BEGINNING?

JUST WHAT DID HE MEAN BY EVERY-THING? AND WHERE EXACTLY WAS THIS BEGINNING?

PUNPUN COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE WORDS OF THE MAN SITTING IN FRONT OF HIM.

PUNPUN HAD THE FEELING,

THIS MAN WAS MERELY MESSING AROUND.

"I..."

"I WANT TO LIVE ALONE."

OH ..

I SEE...

THAT'S ALRIGHT.

HAHA. HA

HM?

DID YOU MAKE THIS COFFEE CUP, YUUICHI?

SEE YOUR ARTISTIC SKILLS ARE AS GOOD AS EVER!

THAT'S JUST FINE TOO...

AH...HM

YOU'VE REALLY GROWN UP THESE PAST FEW YEARS...

WOW, PUNPUN.

BUT UMM...

OR IS THAT NOT PHYSICALLY POSSIBLE? AHAHA!

I BET YOU'RE 3 TIMES BIGGER THAN WHEN I LAST SAY YOU!

WHOOPS, SILLY ME!

OH WAIT, I ALREADY SAID THAT BEFORE, DIDN'T I'?

UMM..

I GUESS I SHOULD,

GET GOING NOW.

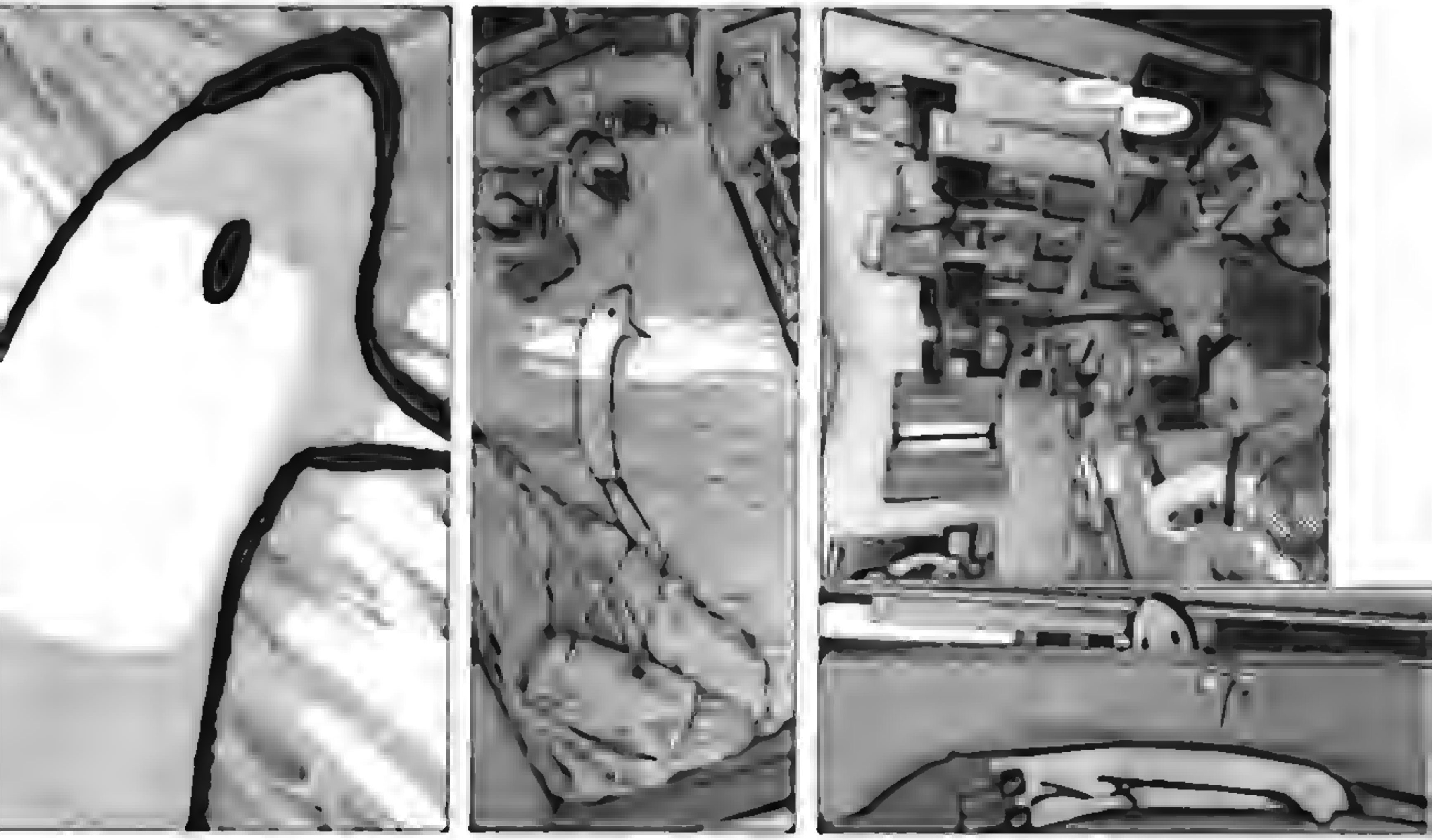
SEE YOU LATER THEN

I'LL ALWAYS BE YOUR DAD.

JUST REMEMBER THAT NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU GROW UP,

PUNPUN.

BYE-BYE-KIN,



WHY DON'T WE...

GO FOR A LITTLE WALK?

EVEN I GET A LITTLE SENTI-MENTAL,

ON A DAY LIKE THIS...

HAHA...

HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN,

SINCE YOU AND I WALKED ALONG TOGETHER LIKE THIS...?

PEOPLE ARE JUST TOO SELFISH

I UNDERSTAND YOUR IRRITATION, PUNPUN.

MY SISTER, MY BROTHER-IN-LAW, AND OF COURSE, MYSELF AS WELL...

WE'RE ALL LIVING ON A PATH WE'VE CHOSEN.

AFTER ALL, LIFE IS ABOUT REAPING WHAT YOU SOW.

ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

YES, THEY'RE ALL IMPORTANT THINGS AS WE...

BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN ACTIONS.

BUT IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE DECIDED, I WON'T SAY ANYTHING AGAINST IT.

EVEN IF YOU WERE TO BECOME A SERIAL KILLER OR A SHUT-IN, IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS TO INTERFERE.

WHEN I HEARD YOU SAY YOU WANTED TO LIVE ALONE,

I WAS FRANKLY QUITE DUMB-FOUNDED.

EVEN MY LITTLE WILLY SEEMED TO SHRIVEL UP.

BUT,

IF YOU EVER BLAME OTHERS FOR WHATEVER MAY HAPPEN TO YOU...

I SWEAR I'LL COME AFTER YOU WITH A KATANA!

BUT WITH THAT FREEDOM COMES RESPONSI-BILITY. DON'T YOU EVER FORGET THAT, BOY.

THERE'S A SHOCKING AMOUNT OF FREEDOM IN ONE'S LIFE!

GOT IT!?

AND WHEN SHE AND I DECIDED TO GET MARRIED,

WE DECIDED TO TELL EACH OTHER ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED IN OUR LIVES.

I KNOW ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN YOU AND HER.

IN FACT, I LOVE YOU JUST AS MUCH AS EVER!

LARK

I THINK...

THAT LIFE IS JUST TOO AMUSING.

EVEN A USELESS PIECE OF TRASH LIKE ME COMES TO THINK LIKE THAT.

THERE'S NOT A MOMENT IN LIFE THAT'S A WASTE OF TIME

ALL THE WHILE HOPING FOR THE DAY WHEN MIDORI'LL DELIVER THE FINAL BLOW.

AND SO,

I CONTINUE TO LIVE OUT THESE ORDINARY DAYS...

WHERE WILL YOUR GRAVE BE?

PUNPUN...

AND WILL YOUR LIFE STILL BE BURNING THERE AND THEN?

PUNPUN...

YOU MUST THINK.

WRACK YOUR HEAD OVER IT!

AND THEN DECIDE YOUR INTENT.

EVEN IF YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND ANYTHING,

AS LONG AS YOU TRY YOUR BEST TO UNDER-STAND AND KEEP MOVING FORWARD,

YOU'LL MANAGE TO REMAIN YOURSELF.

EVEN IN THESE DULL DAYS...

AND THIS WORTHLESS PLACE,

THE ONLY THING YOU CAN CHANGE IS YOU YOURSELF!

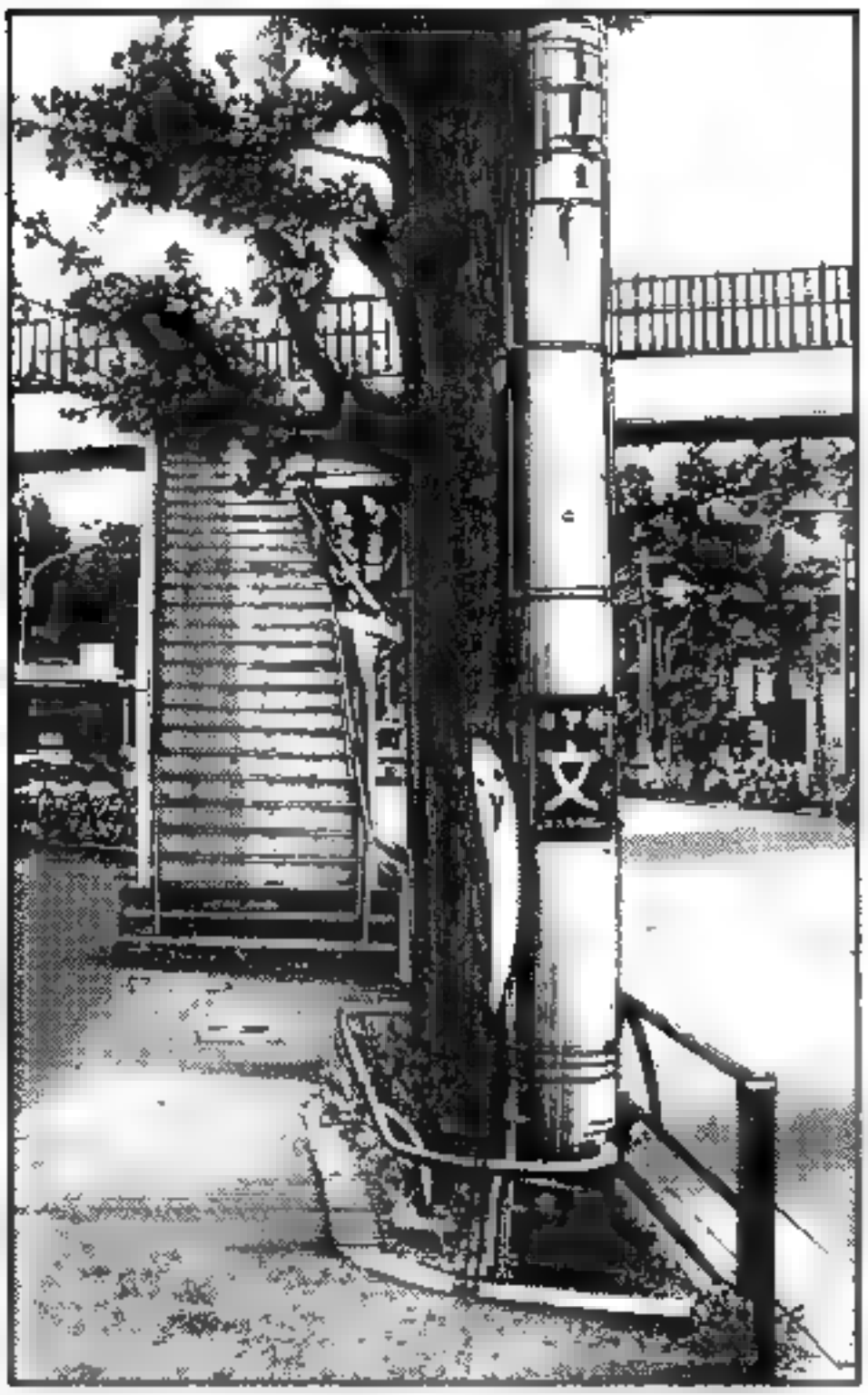
THAT'S WHY,

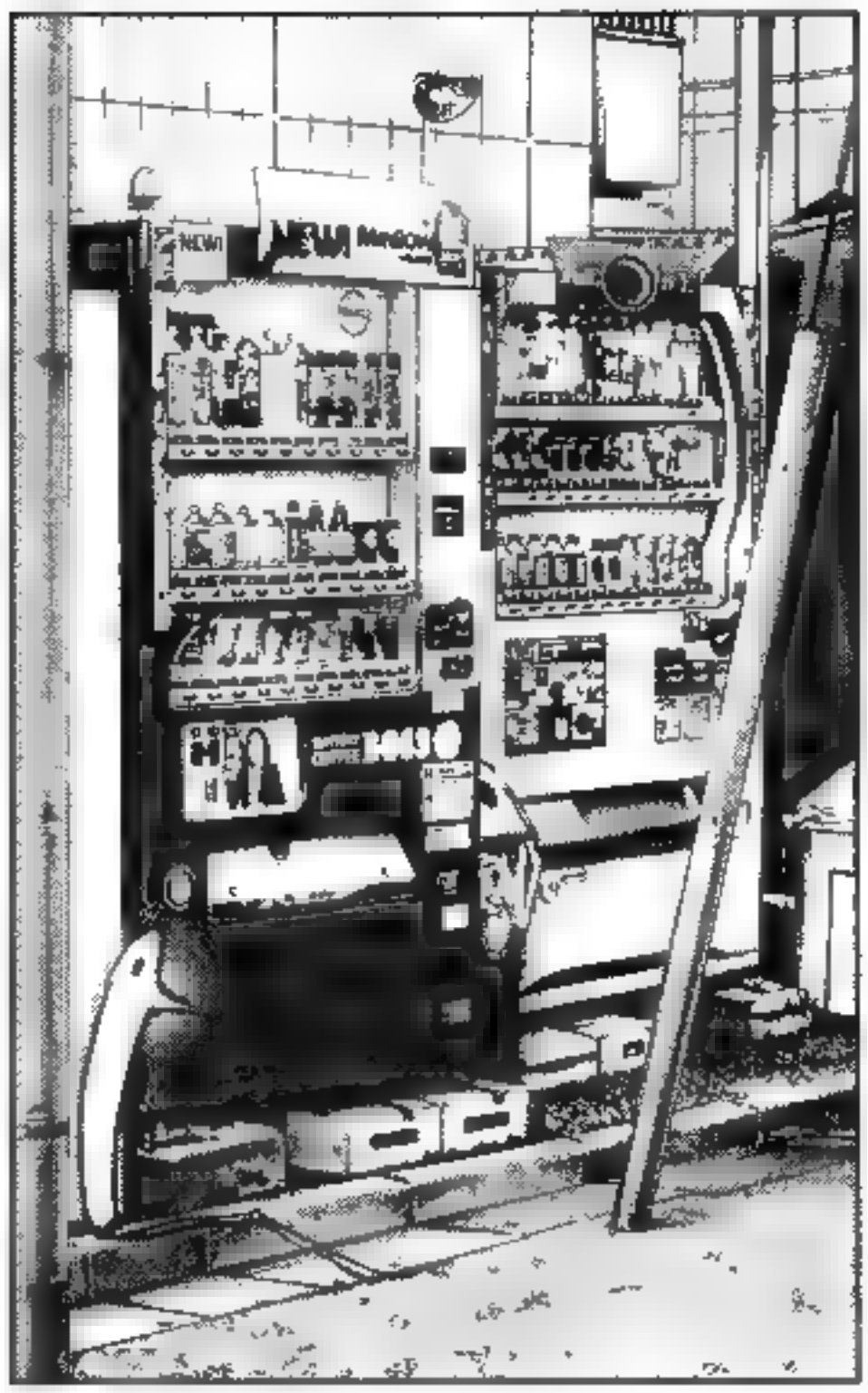
AS LONG AS YOU REMAIN YOURSELF...

THE CIGARETTE SMOKE HELPLESSLY DISPERSED IN THE AIR AND SOON DISSOLVED IN THE NIGHT SKY.

WILL BE YOURS.

AS IF ASSURING THAT THINGS WOULD NEVER RETURN TO THE WAY THEY WERE, PUBLIUS BREATHED IN THE SMOKE SLOWLY AND DEEPLY.





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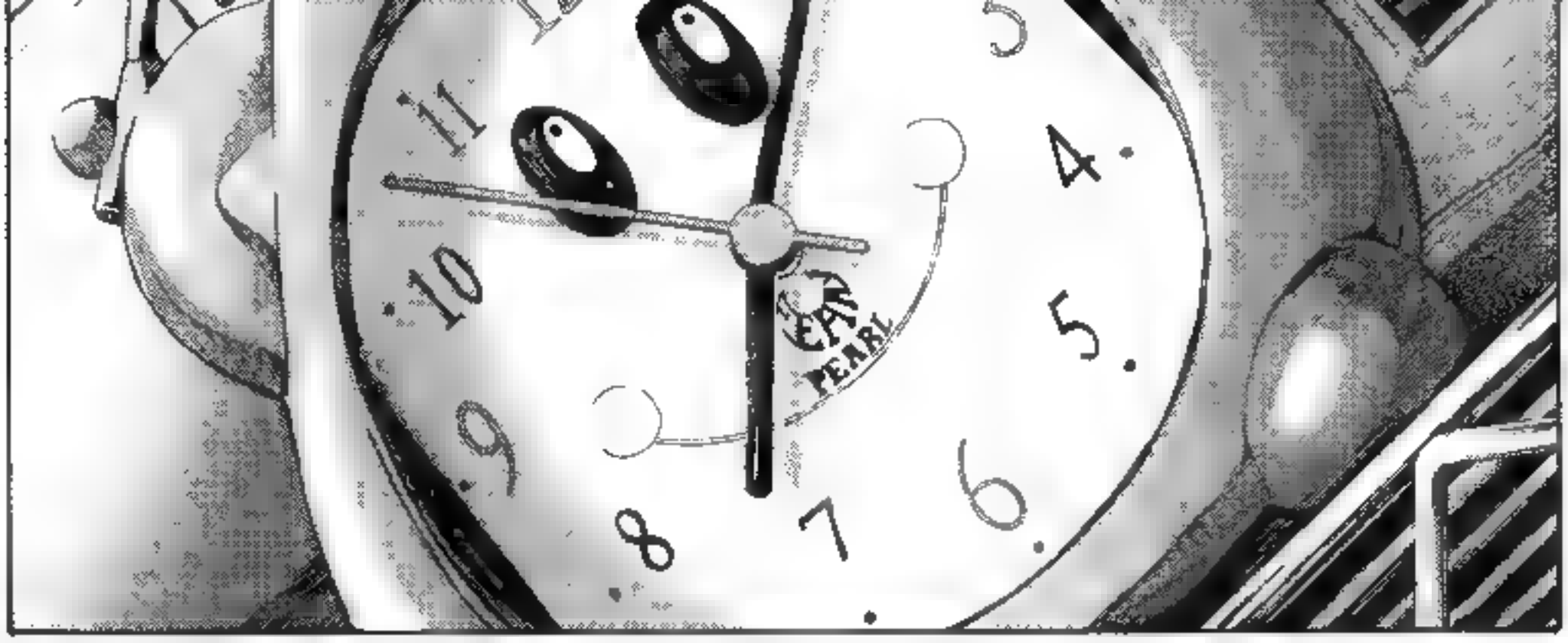
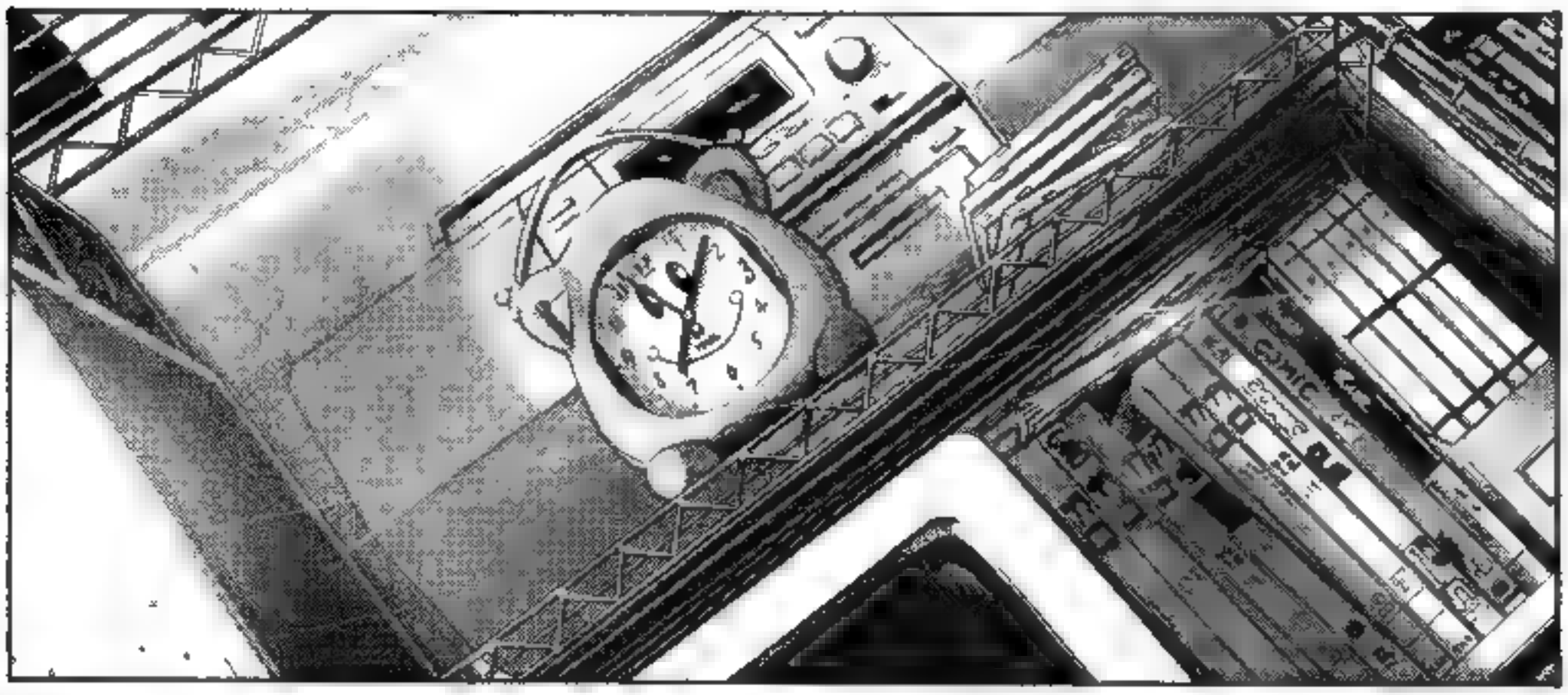


THE REVERBERATING TICKING NOISE OF THE SECOND HAND.

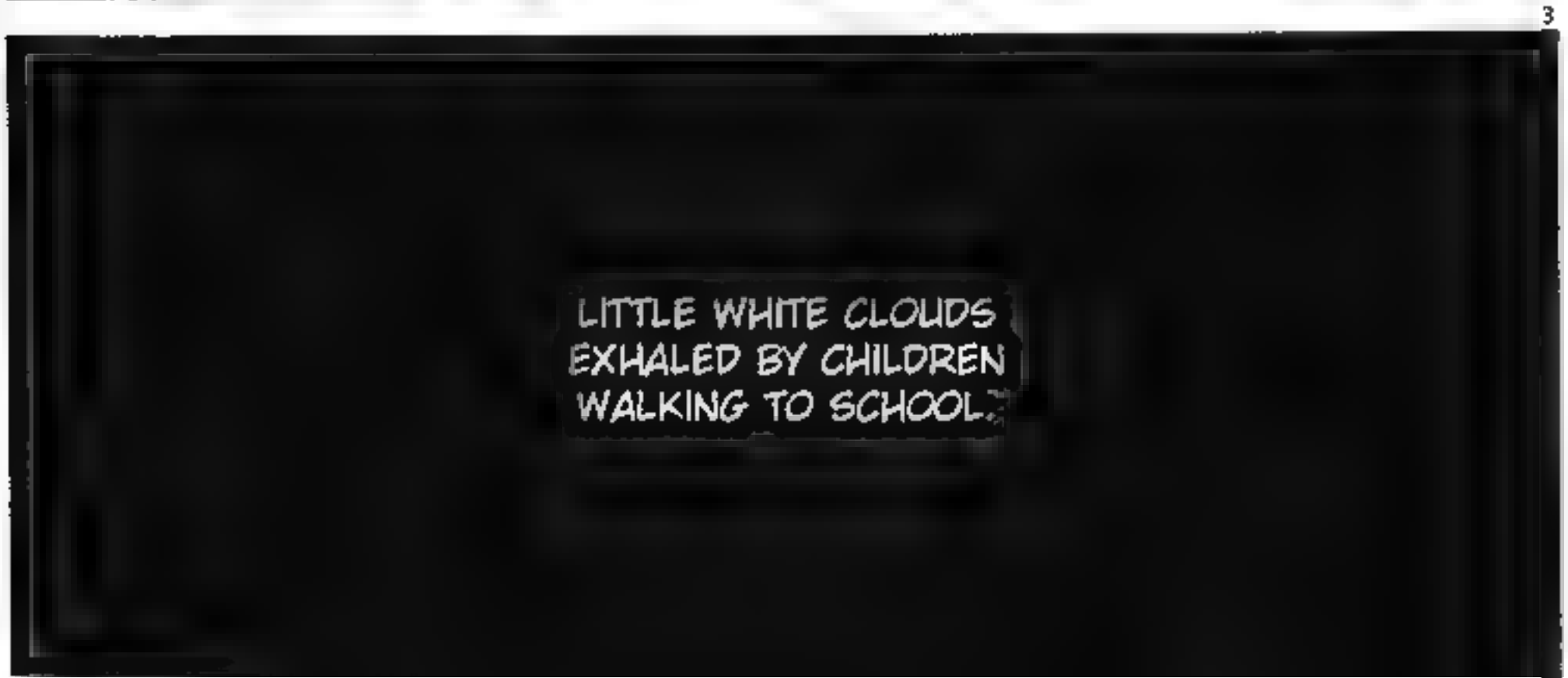


THE ALARM CLOCK THAT RINGS AT 7:10 AM.

NEWS THAT SOUNDS ALL TOO FAMILIAR.

KNITTED-CARTIGAN AND MUFFLER.

THE SMELL OF
MORNING.

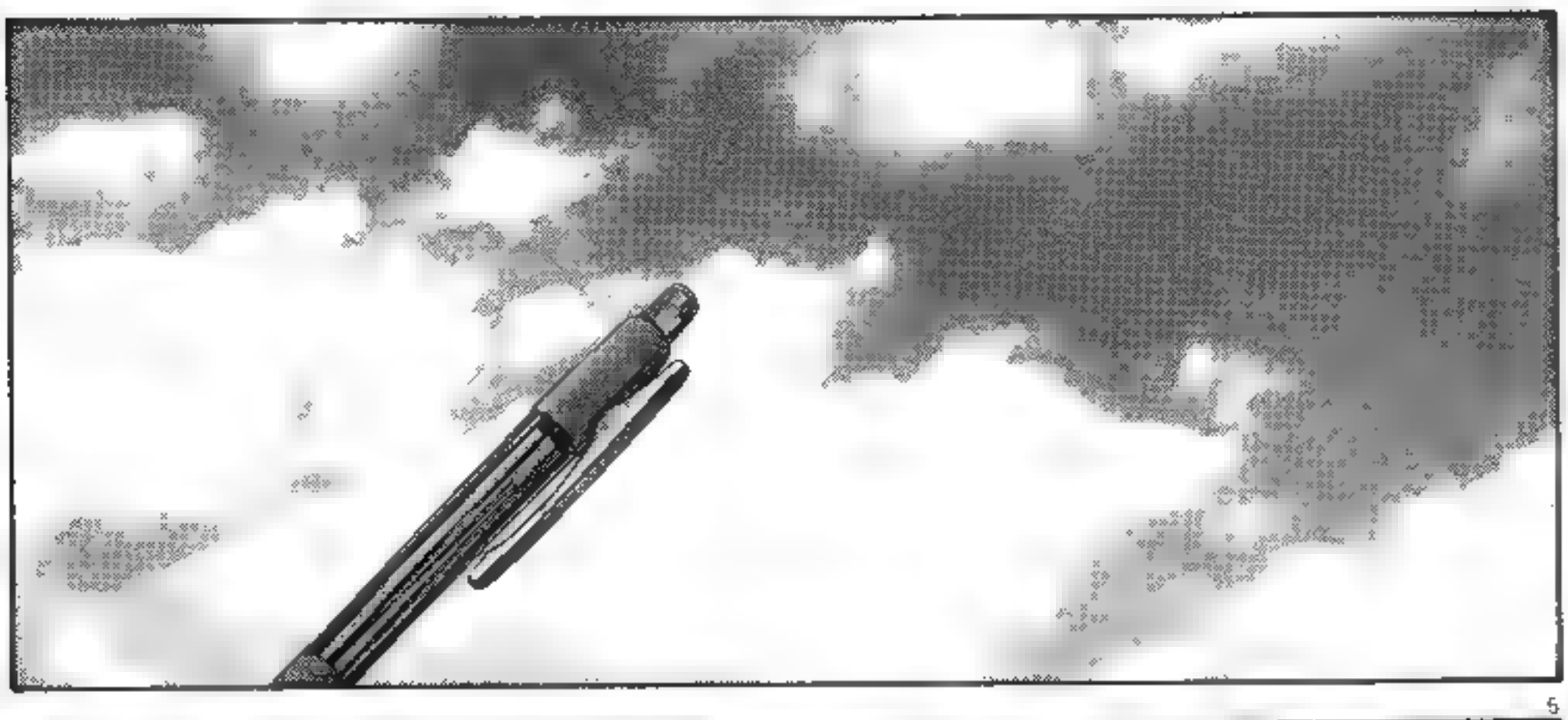

LITTLE WHITE CLOUDS
EXHALED BY CHILDREN
WALKING TO SCHOOL.

AND THE PLATFORM'S TIRED ATMOSPHERE FULL OF YAWNING AND SIGHING.
THE TRAIN THAT ARRIVES AT 7:45 AM,

AND J-POP SPILLING OUT FROM ANOTHER'S HEADPHONES.
MEANINGLESS CHIT-CHAT.

AND FOOTSTEPS WALKING UPSTAIRS.

HURRIED OPENING OF SHOE-LOCKERS,



AND THE WINTER SKY.

SCRATCHING OF PENCILS,

THE HELL? WHAT'S WITH MIMURA TODAY?

NOT SURE BUT I THINK HE WAS DUMPED.

MY DICK'S THE BEST IN THE WORLD!

THE USUAL CLASSROOM.

MAN, ALL YOU DO THESE DAYS IS SLEEP!

HOW'D YOUR EXAMS GO?

YO!

ONODERA!

SOMEONE'S LIP BALM FALLING FROM THE DESK AND ROLLING ON THE FLOOR.

BUT...

THAT'S ONLY ONE STEP OF MY MASTER PLAN! AND THAT VERY PLAN IS...

SURE, I MAY LOOK LIKE AN EASY-GOING GUY WHO'S ALREADY DECIDED TO APPLY FOR THE UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDED TO ME...

A RAGGED COMICS MAGAZINE WORN OUT FROM BEING ROLLED.

KEEP IT DOWN A LITTLE, MIMURA! YOU'RE SO NOISY!

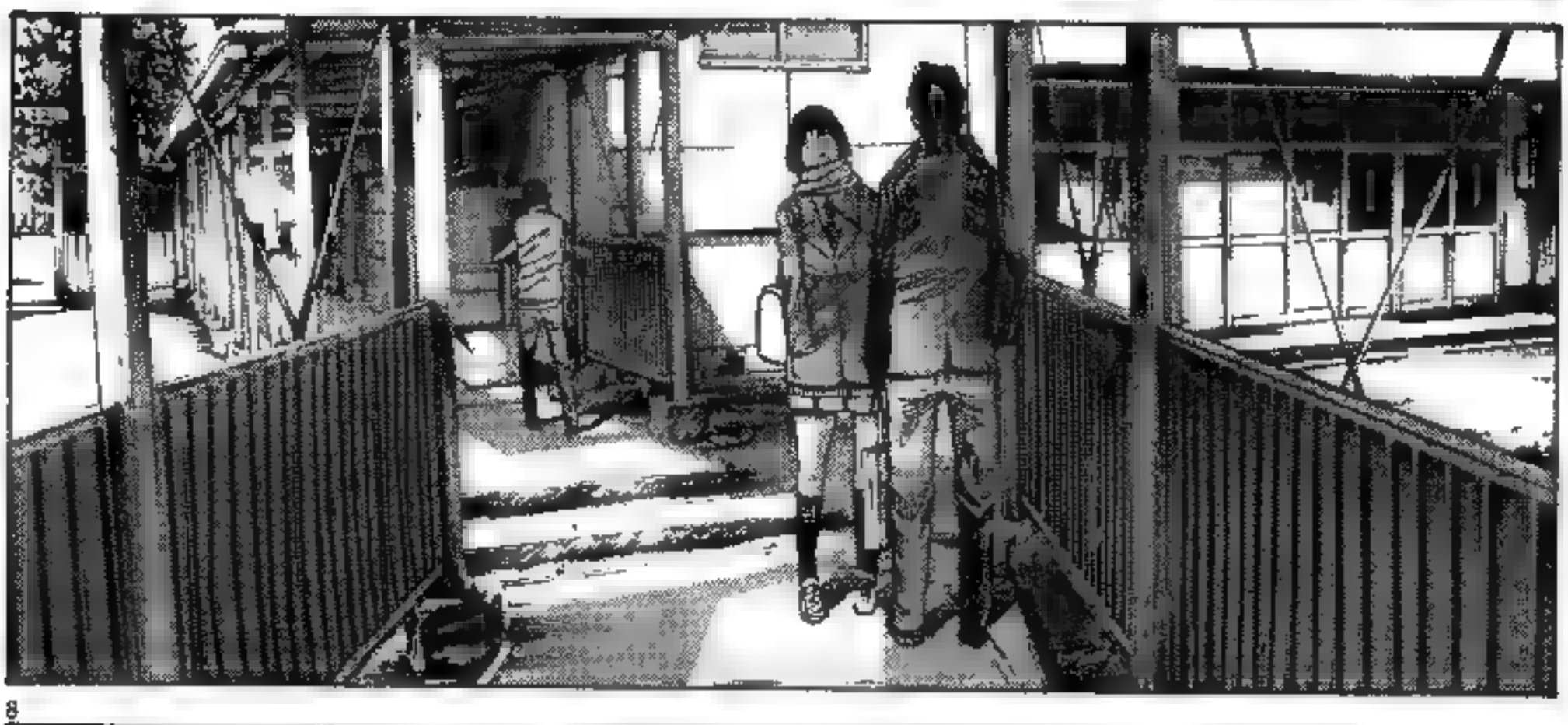
TO BUILD A PYRAMID IN SHIBUYA!

PYUN!

AN ANSWER SHEET THROWN AWAY IN THE TRASH CAN.

HEY, LET'S DECIDE ON WHERE TO GO FOR OUR GRADUATION TRIP.
YEAH, SUREEE. I BET YOU'RE JUST GONNA WATCH KOUHAKU.
STUDYING, DUH WHAT ELSE?
ANY PLANS FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE?

COFFEE MILK ON THE ROOFTOP.



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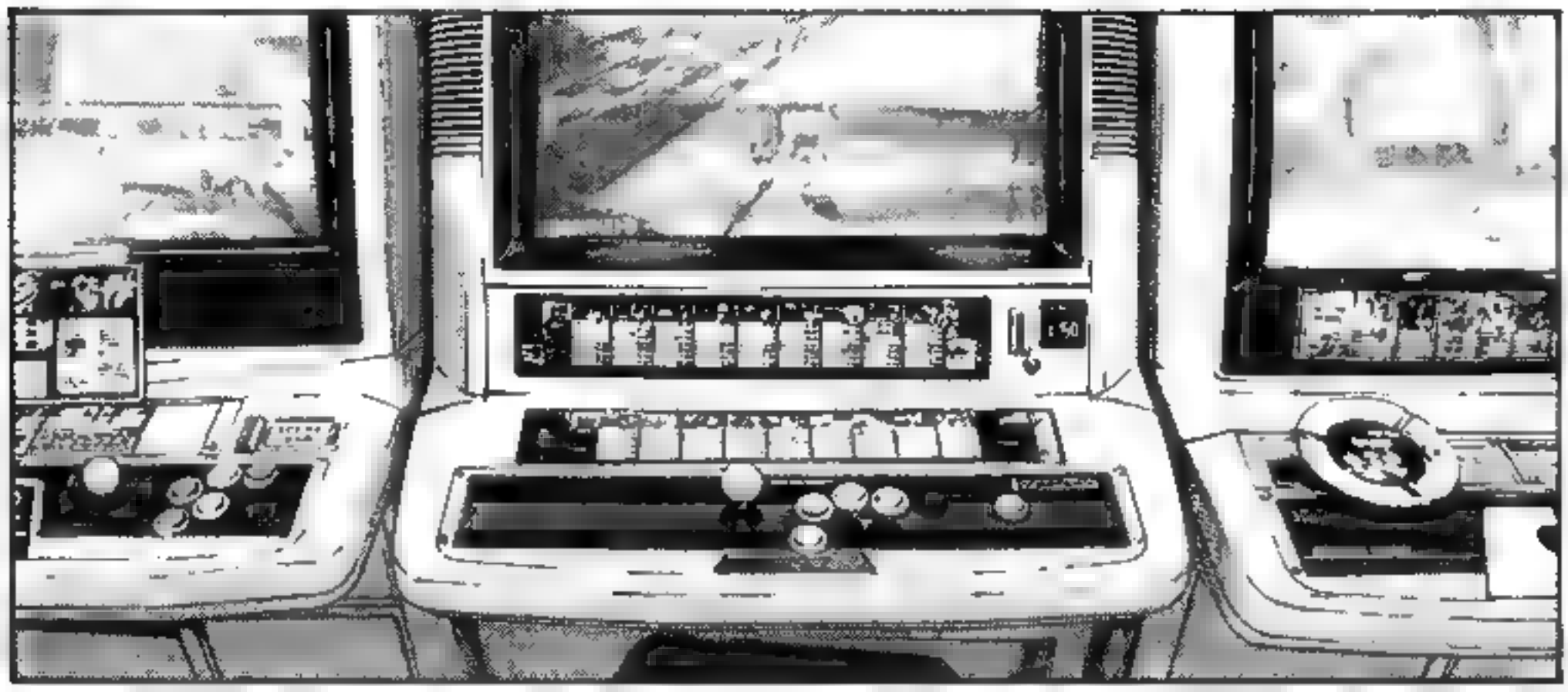
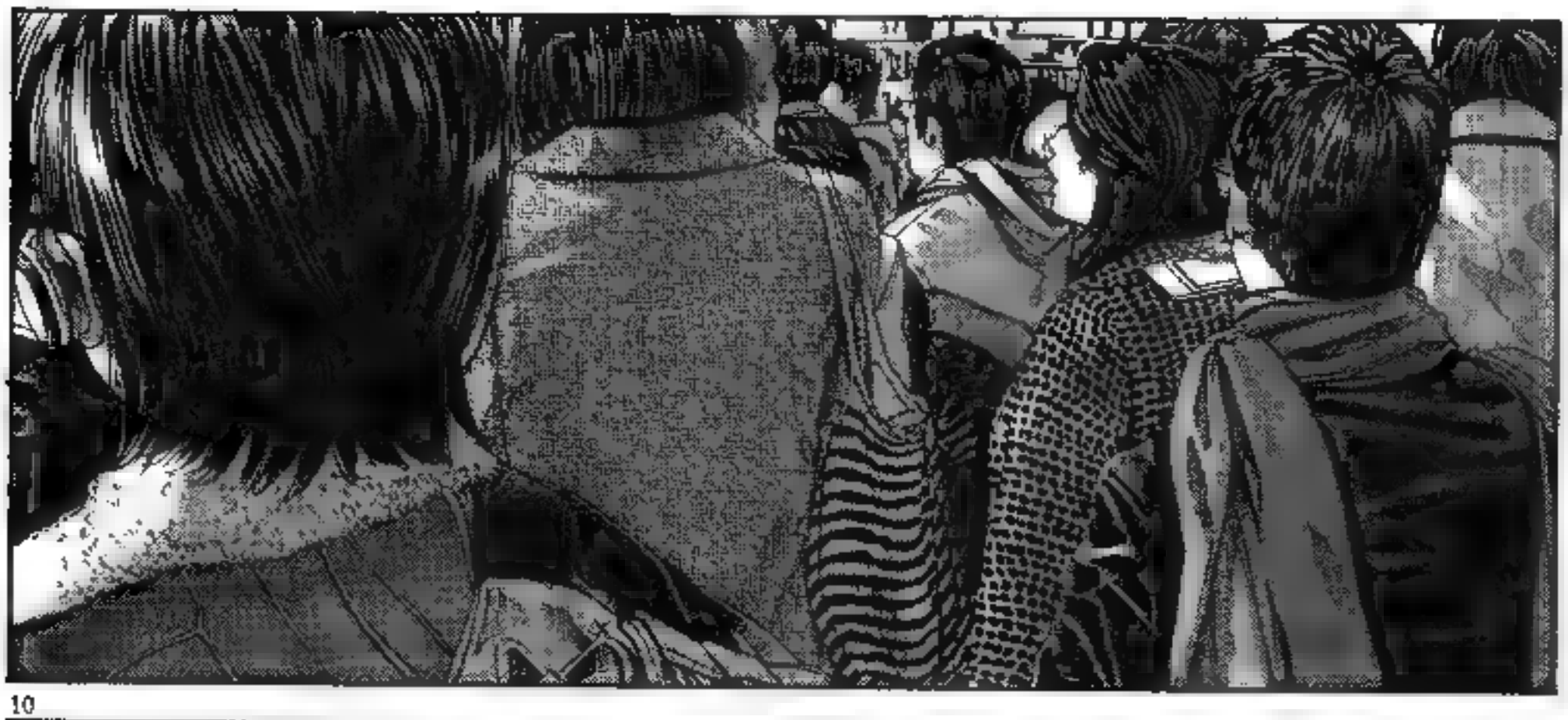
THE QUIET STILLNESS AFTER SCHOOL.

AND CHRISTMAS SONGS BLARING OUT FROM SPEAKERS.
THE VIDEO RENTAL STORE'S BARGAIN SALES,



AN ARCADE FIGHTER 50 YEN PER PLAY.

WALKING THIS WAY
AND THAT WAY.
THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE
OF THE CITY IN DECEMEBER.



PEOPLE,
PEOPLE,
PEOPLE.

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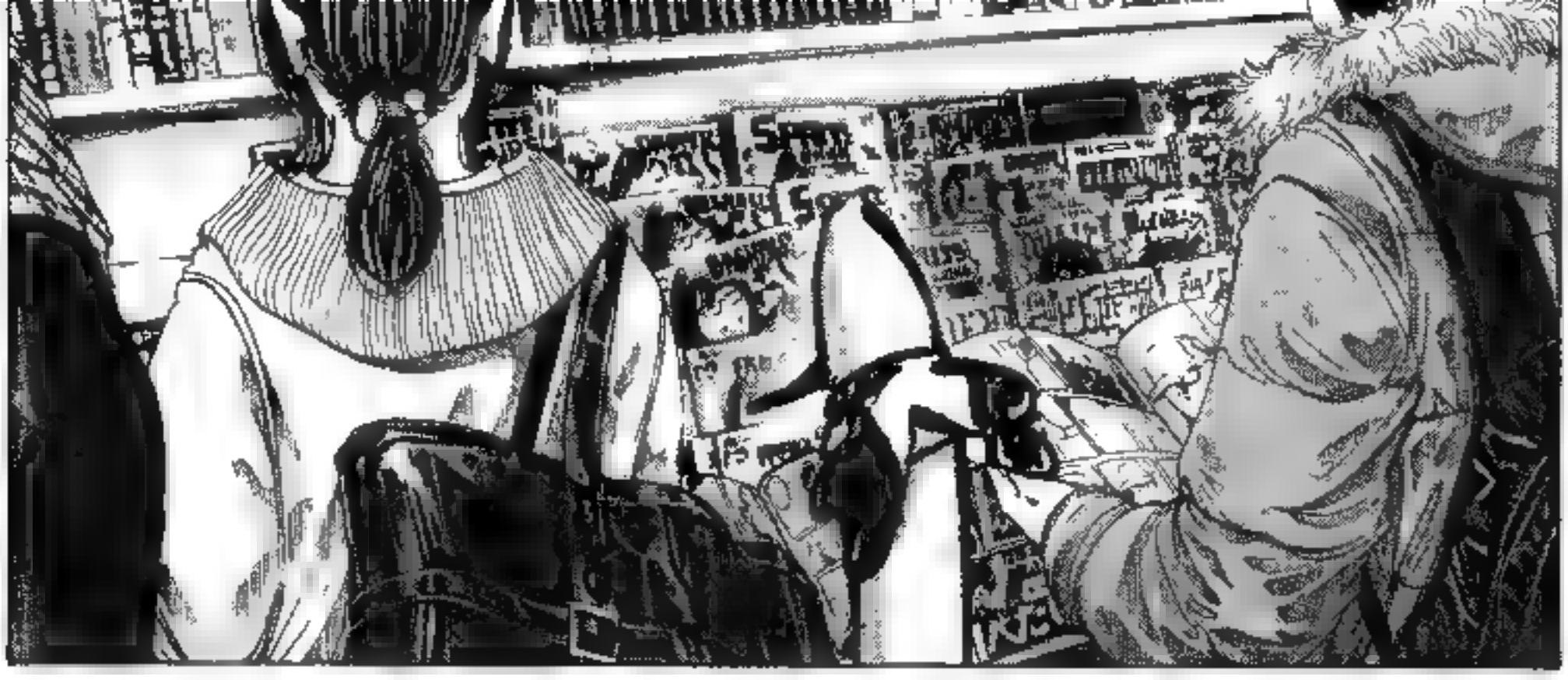
SOLITUDE.

FREEDOM.



THE COMICS CORNER OF THE CONVENIENCE STORE.

LOW-SUGAR CANNED COFFEE.

PITCH BLACK ROOM.

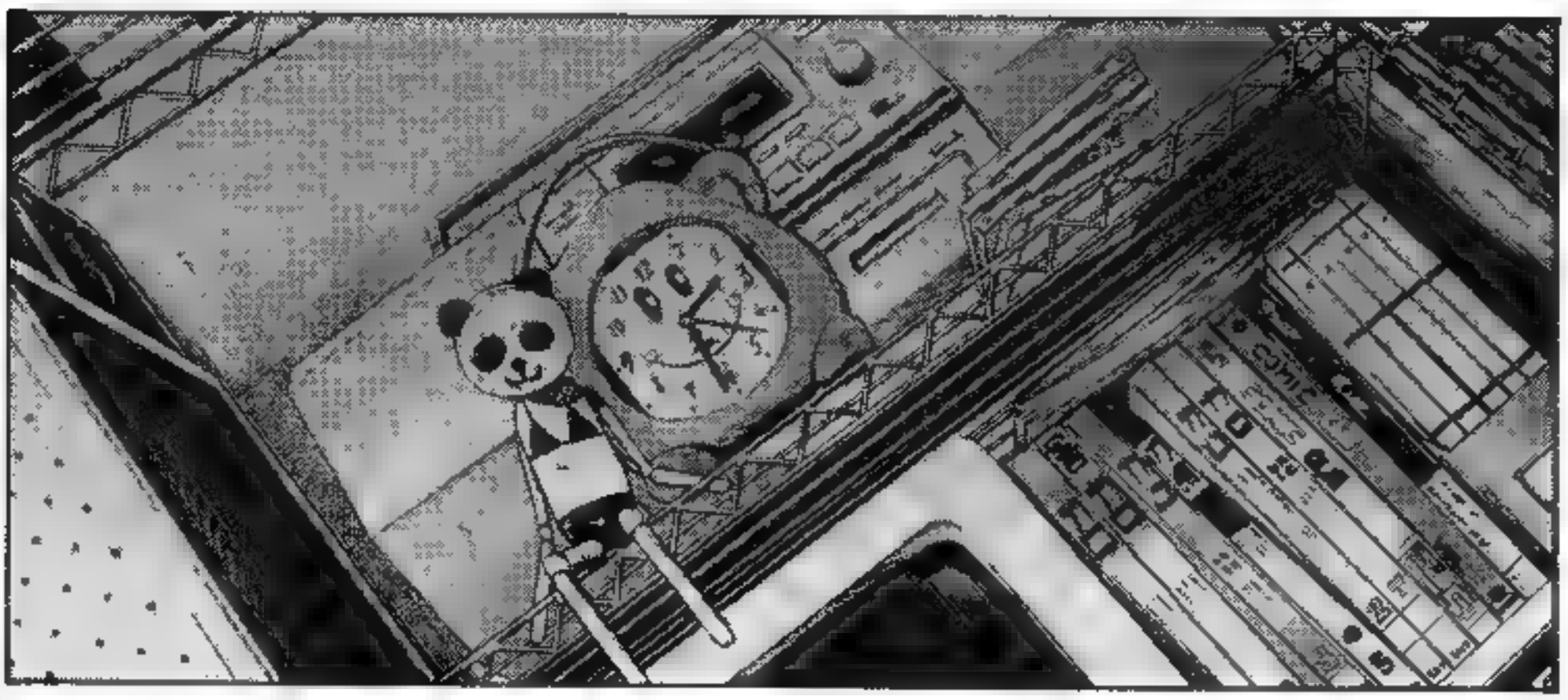
How's your cold? You need to eat up if you want to get any better! I also put a chocolate cake in your fridge (it's almost Christmas, after all!). I'll come by next Wednesday. I've put the rice in the pantry

-Midori-

P.S. I found this at a shop and it was so cute I just had to buy it.

COLD DINNER.

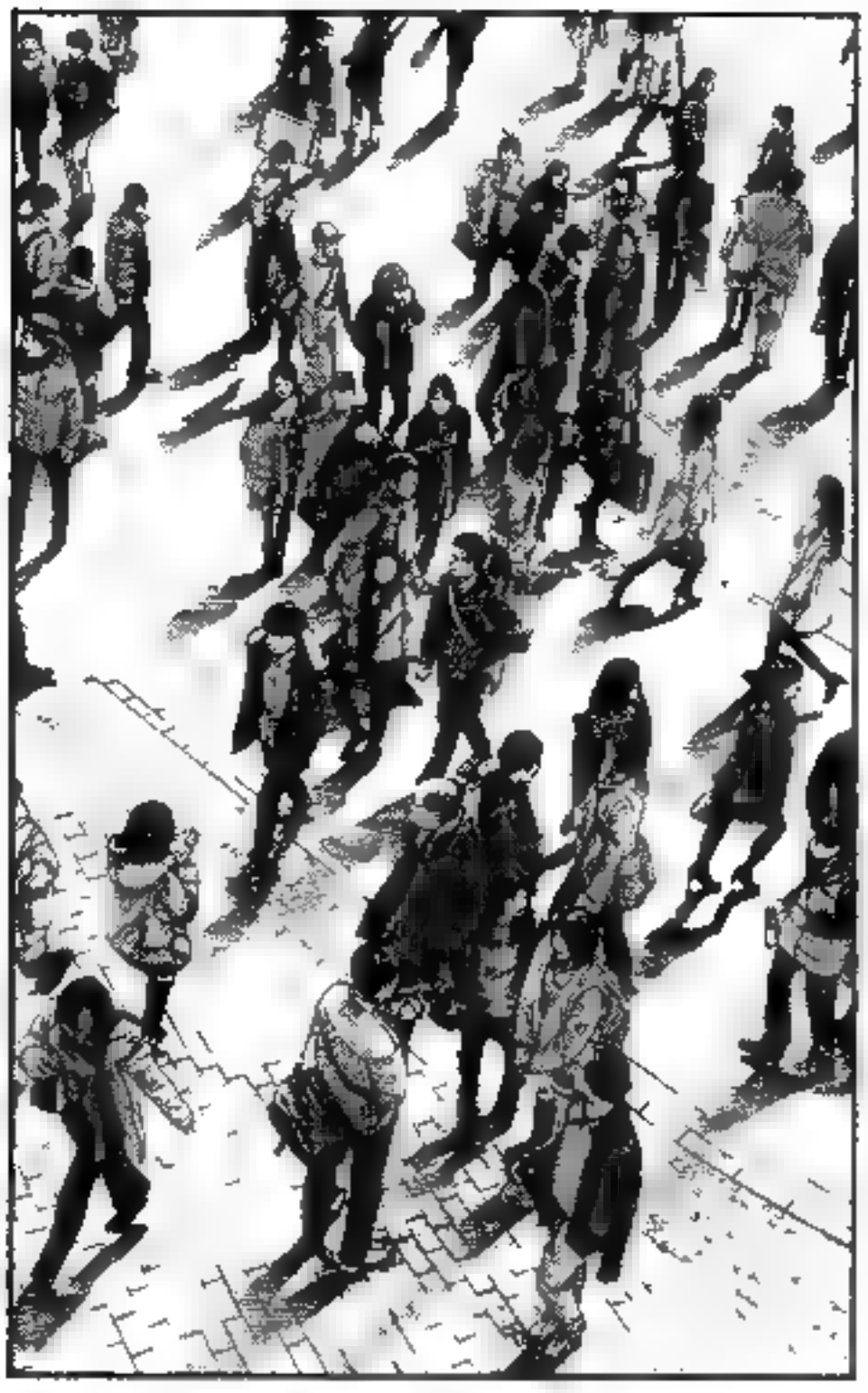
NEWS THAT SOUNDS ALL TOO FAMILIAR.



THE ALARM CLOCK SET AT 7:10 AM.

PUNPUN IS...

JUST FINE
AGAIN TODAY.



YOUNG SUNDAY COMICS

Asano Inio

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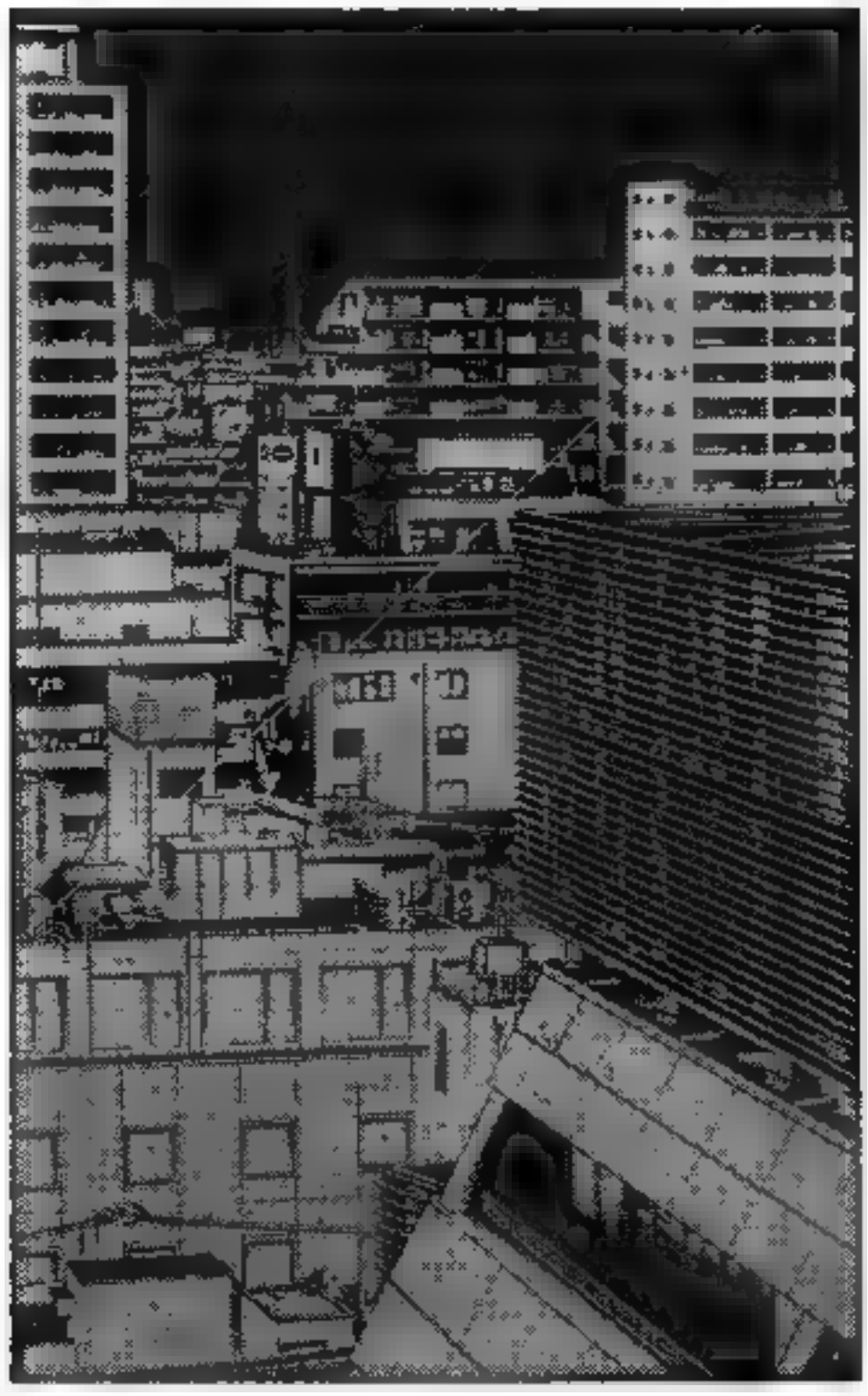
Goodnight Punpun



THOUGHT YOU'D BE HERE BY NOW...

GOOD VIBRATIONS.

YOU SURE ARE QUITE CAREFREE TO BE ARRIVING 15MIN LATE.

I LOVE EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU...!

LET US GIVE

MY HOBBY IS KEEPING UP WITH TEEN IDOLS! OF COURSE, I WOULD NEVER CROSS THE LINE BETWEEN BEING A FAN AND BEING A STALKER.

I HOPE WE CAN GET ALONG WELL!

IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU!

HERE, I GO BY THE NICKNAME "PAOPAO CHANNEL."

I REMEMBER WHEN WE FIRST MET, YOU WERE MUMBLING AND EVER SO SHY...

HMM.

YOU'VE REALLY BECOME ABLE TO SPEAK SO CLEARLY NOW

A ROAD TO BECOME ONE

OH, PLEASE. THIS IS ALL DUE TO MY OWN HARD EFFORTS!

I FIRST BECAME AQUAINTED WITH PEGASUS AT A CULTURE SCHOOL DANCE.

YOU CAN CALL ME, "ECHO BACK."

I'M AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT MY UNIVERSITY'S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WHY DON'T I PERFORM A LITTLE DANCE FOR YOUR SAKE TONIGHT?

YOI YOI!

EXCELLENT!

AS EXPECTED OF OUR MADONNA...

I'M "WHITE PIG." I WORK AS A SHOP CLERK.

DID YOU KNOW ALL GIRLS CAN DO WONDERFUL MAGIC?

YOU SHOULD LOOK FORWARD TO OUR ANNUAL SUMMER BARBECUE!

I'M "HAVING-ONE-BATTERY-LEFT-OVER-IS-TROUBLESOME."

I WORK IN WEB DESIGN AND PUBLISH INDIE MAGZ ON THE SIDE.

I WOULD LOVE TO DISCUSS OOPARTS AND MYSTERIOUS GIANT ORGANISMS WITH YOU SOMETIME

"LOVE INFINITE" SPEAKING.

I'M A 28 YEAR OLD FREETER.

I MAY NOT LOOK LIKE IT BUT I'M RATHER KNOWLEDGEABLE WHEN IT COMES TO SPORTS

I'VE EVEN ONCE COMPETED IN THE NATIONAL SWIM MEET.

HI, I'M "ASS HAM-BURGER."

I'M ATTENDING A V.A.E ACTING SCHOOL IN HOPES OF BECOMING A VOICE ACTOR ONE DAY.

I'M SORRY IF MY ANIME-ISH SCREAMING V.A.E SOUNDS FAKE BUT THAT'S JUST MY NORMAL VOICE

I'M A MOTHER OF TWO AND MY HOBBY IS CERAMICS!

SPEAKING AS A MIDDLE AGED WOMAN, I'M SO GLAD TO BE FRIENDS WITH SUCH A YOUNG PERSON LIKE YOU!

I'M GUARDIAN ANGEL GIBOBOGIG!!

ALL THE GUYS HERE ARE INCREDIBLY NICE!

NICE TA MEET'CHA BABY!

I USED TO DO SOME PRETTY BAD THINGS BACK WHEN I WAS IN A GANG. BUT NOW, I'M JUST AN HONEST DELIVERY MAN ENSURING YOUR PARCELS ARE SAFE!

THE NAME'S CONTRARY!

ME AND PEGASUS HAVE BEEN TIGHT EVER [illegible]

[illegible] NOTHING DIFFERENT FROM YOUR COLLEGE CLUBS.

SWEET PRETTY LONELY HEART FLUFFYBRO SPEAKING, YO.

I'M A MATH TEACHER AT A PRETTY WELL KNOWN CRAM [illegible]

[illegible] WE'RE [illegible] JEAN ALIKE.

SO JUMP RIGHT IN!

[illegible]

PLEASE, LET US HEAR YOUR LOVELY VOICE...

[illegible]

AND WELCOME,
TO THE PEGASUS ENSEMBLE...!

UMM...

I'LL BE ENTERING UNIVERSITY WITH THE HOPES OF BECOMING AN ACCOUNTANT...

H-HI.

I'M NUMATA HIROMI!

I EVEN WONDERED WHAT MEANING THERE WAS IN CONTINUING TO LIVE IN THIS DULL WORLD.

BUT

THAT IT WASN'T THE WORLD THAT WAS DULL AND LIFELESS,

BUT *MYSELF!*

ON ONE NIGHT, I FOUND MYSELF SURROUNDED BY THIS BRIGHT LIGHT,

AND I JUST HAD THE MOST AMAZING EPIPHANY...

BUT I JUST HAD THE FEELING THAT THIS WAS TOO MUCH TO BE A COIN-CIDENCE,

AND THAT THIS MAN MIGHT JUST BE MY "GOD" WHO'LL GUIDE ME!

I MET WITH PEGASUS THE DAY RIGHT AFTER.

I DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS SOME-THING ABOUT HIS AURA OR WHATNOT...

ALLOW ME TO PLAY ONE PIECE.

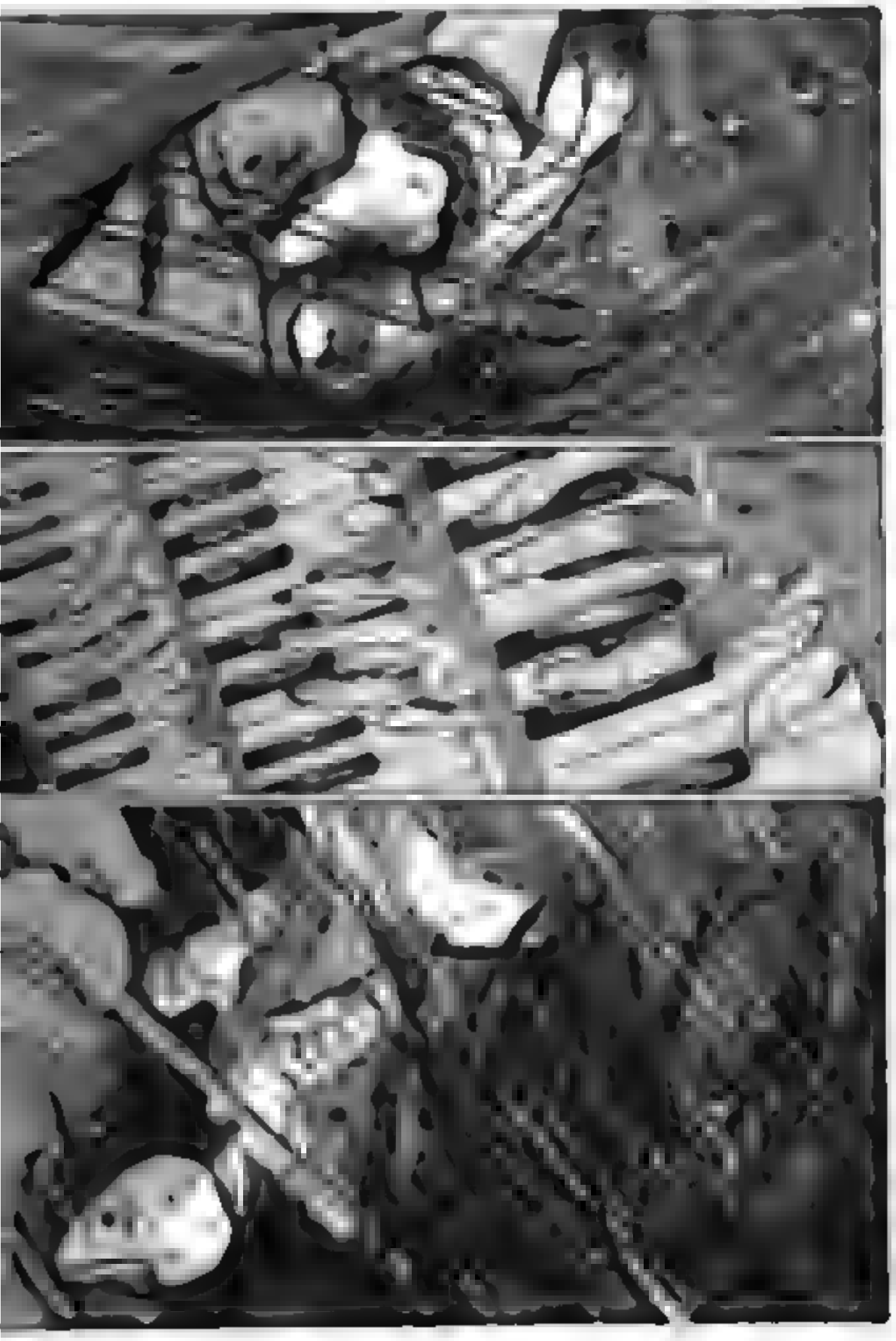
IN YOUR HONOUR...

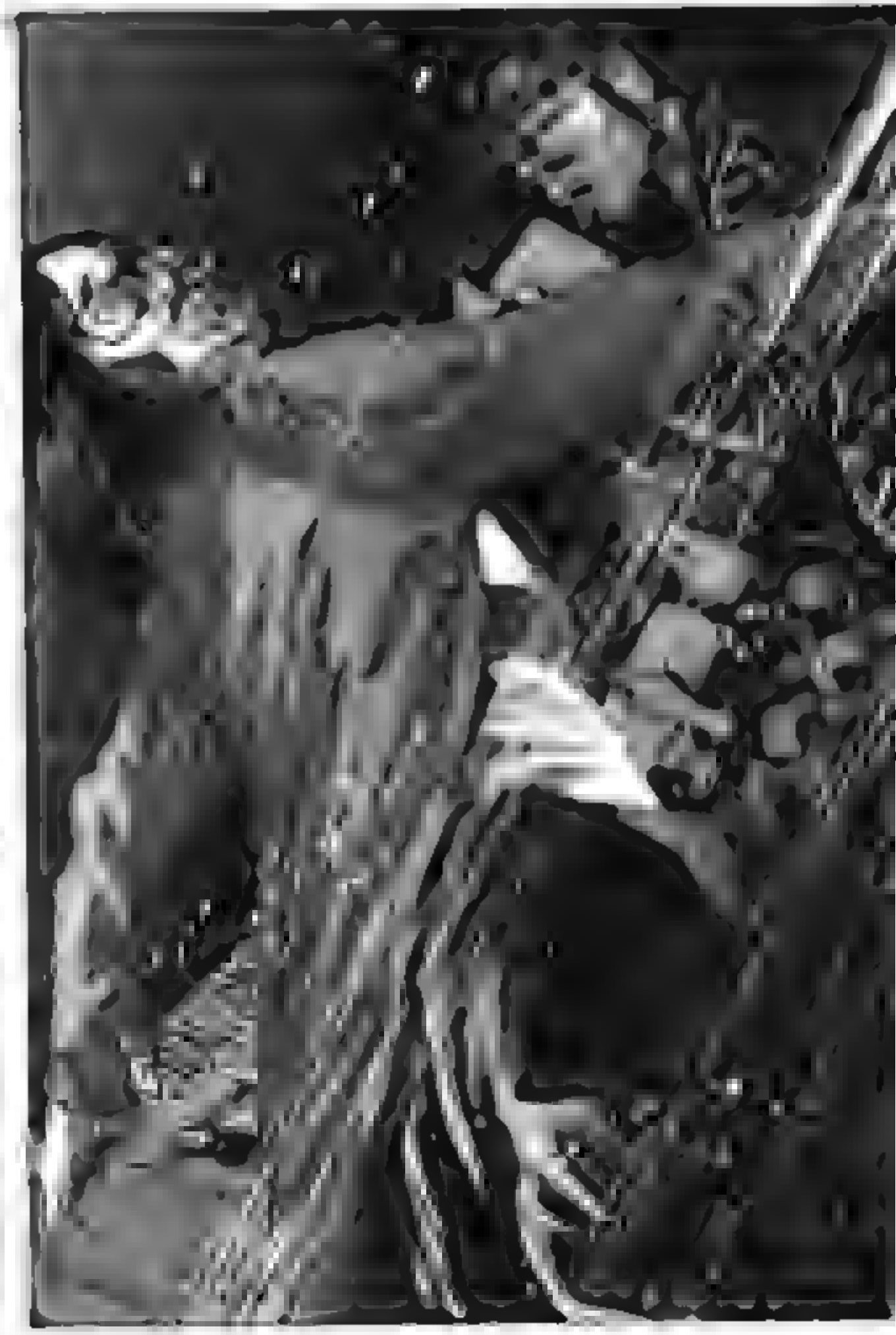
BUT OTHERWISE, VERY GOOD, HIROMI.

NO... FROM NOW ON, YOU'LL BE KNOWN AS PUSSY PRINCESS.

THAT'S ENOUGH!

I'M NOT SO FOOLISH AS TO BE PERFECTLY FINE WHEN SOMEONE CALLS ME A GOD...





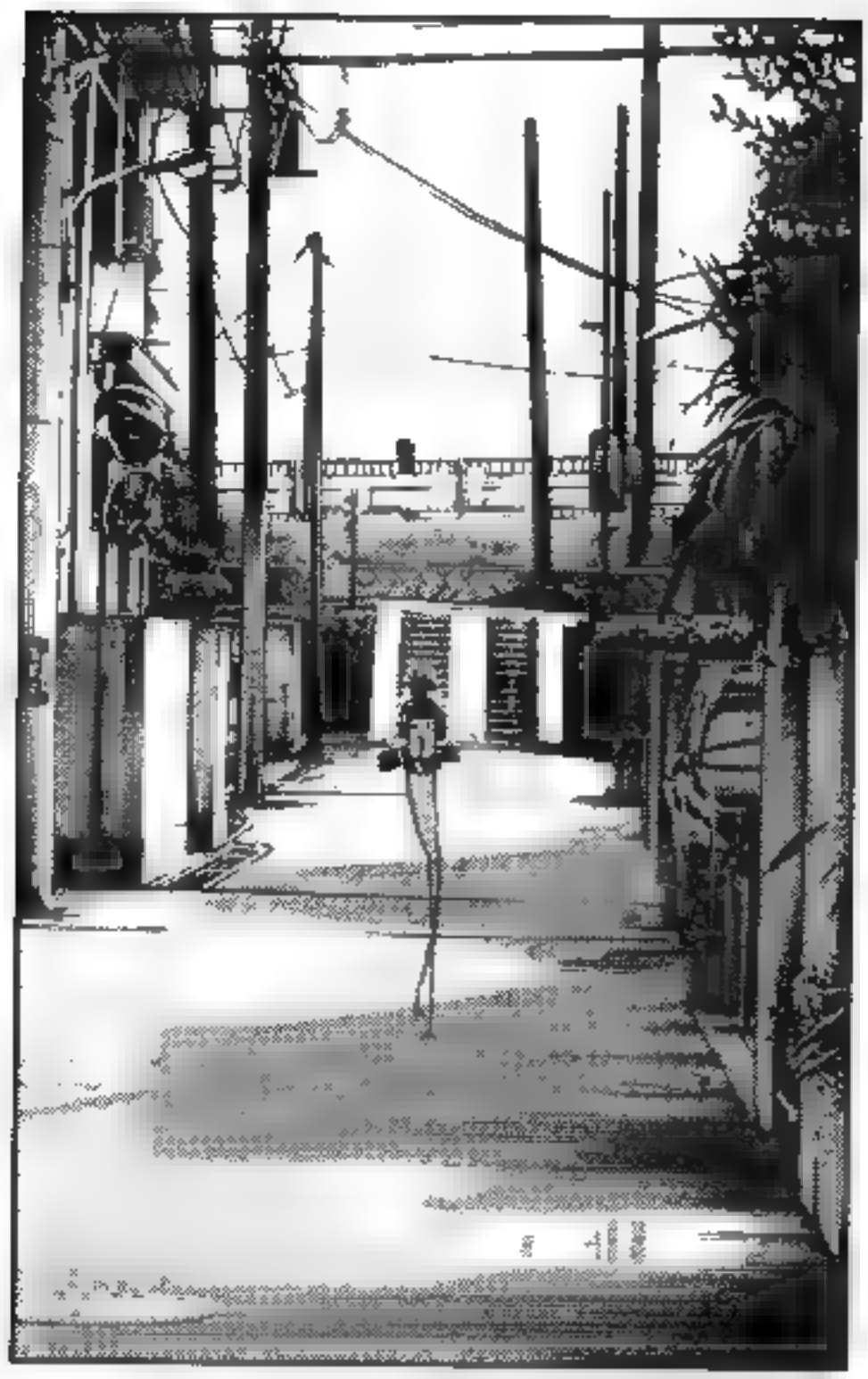
WE ARE SIMPLY PURSUERS,

IS NO CULT OR SOME SELF-ENLIGHTEN-

WOULD YOU ALL PLEASE,

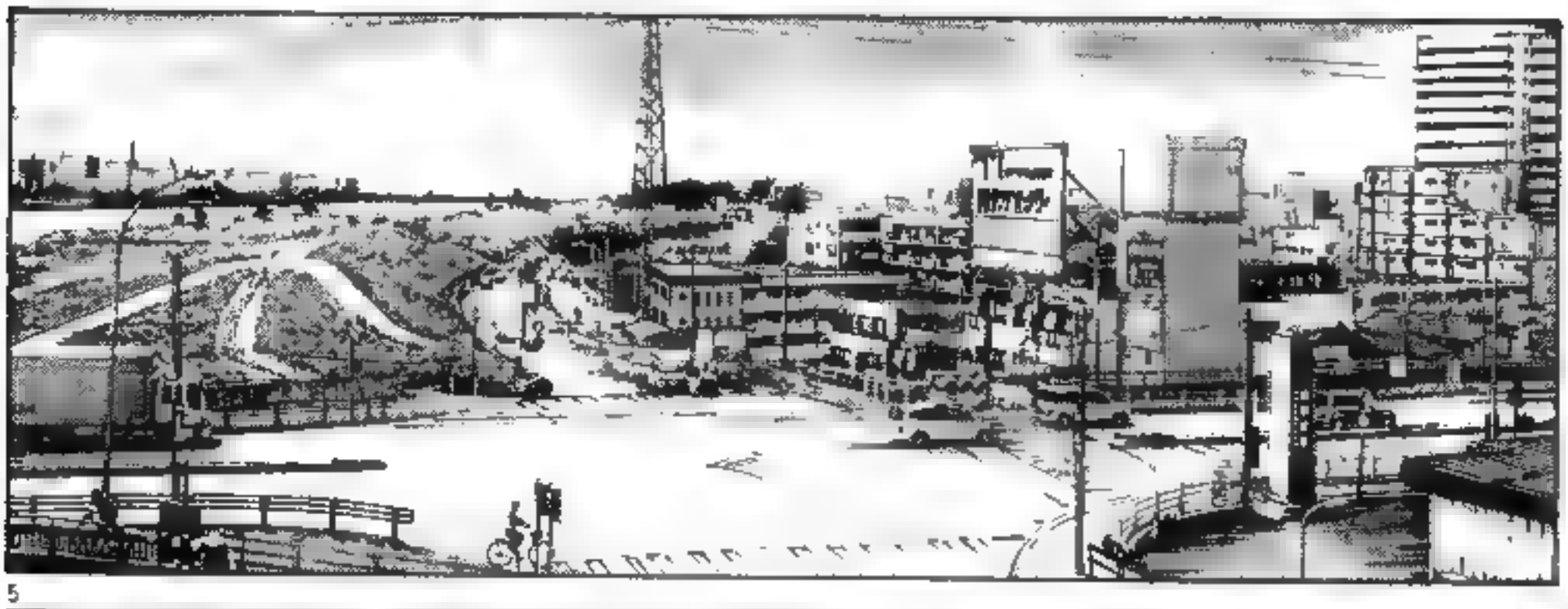
ACCOMPANY ME UNTIL 2 YEARS FROM NOW AT THAT FATED MOMENT...?

18



PUNPUN WAS...

FEELING A LITTLE DEPRESSED ABOUT HAVING TO GO TO HIS PART-TIME WORK TODAY.



HE JUST FELT TOO SLUGGISH FOR ANYTHING REALLY.

THERE WAS NO PARTICULAR REASON REASON TO IT.

IF PRESSED FOR AN ACTUAL REASON, PUNPUN MIGHT SAY THAT HE DIDN'T LIKE BEING EXPLOITED, OR THAT HIS HAY FEVER WAS ACTING UP, OR SO ON AND SO ON.

HE FELT HE COULD NAME 10, NO... 100, NO... 1000 FRIVOLOUS EXCUSES AS TO WHY HE DIDN'T FEEL LIKE WORKING RIGHT NOW.

BUT... THAT'S THE TYPE OF PERSON SOCIETY MIGHT CALL A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING SLACKER.

SIEG ZION!

YOOO! ONODERA!

WE HAVEN'T SEEN EACH OTHER SINCE GRADUATION! HOW'VE YOU BEEN?

OVER HERE, YOU SON OF A GUN!

YOU DON'T LOOK TOO WELL, IS EVERYTHING A'IGHT?

STILL TRYING TO REACH ENLIGHTEN-MENT, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN!

IS WHAT I'D LIKE TO SAY BUT HEY, I'M STILL IN THERE'

AS FOR ME I'VE BEEN TOO BUSY WITH THE LADIES TO GET A DECENT NIGHT'S SLEEP EVER SINCE ENTERING UNIVERSITY!

WHAT, YOU TAKE WALKS EVERY DAY?

IN ANY CASE, SINCE YOU INTRODUCED ME TO YOUR PART-TIME JOB AND ALL, I'LL HELP US GET SOME SWEET BABES TO TALK TO!

WHAT ARE YOU, AN OLD MAN!?

00:00:00

0401

5906

2300

1157

HOW MANY TIMES SHOULD I COUNT FOR THE SAME PERSON WHO WALKS BACK AND FORTH AT MY AREA?

OH. ME! I'VE GOT ONE!

YOU MAY NOW ALL GO TO YOUR DESIGNATED AREAS

ALRIGHT THEN.

DOES ANYBODY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

SO PLEASE MAKE SURE TO CLICK THE COUNTER FOR EVERY PERSON THAT PASSES BY

MANY PEOPLE WALKED BY AGAIN TODAY.

DON'T YOU FEEL A LITTLE GUILTY ABOUT BEING A DRAIN ON YOUR PARENTS' MONEY?

RENT OUT A PLACE AND TRY TO MAKE IT ON YOUR OWN LIKE WHAT I'M DOING! I'M SURE YOU CAN TURN OVER A NEW LEAF THAT WAY!

WELL

I'M NOT TRYING TO CRITICIZE YOU OR ANYTHING BUT

AND AMONG ALL THE PEOPLE PASSING BY WITH CONFIDENT LOOKS ON THEIR FACES, THERE WERE SURE TO BE SOME WHOSE HEARTS WERE SECRETLY WEIGHED DOWN BY FAMILY MATTERS, SICKNESSES, IRREVERSIBLE MISTAKES, AND OTHER GRAVE THINGS.

ALRIGHT, I'LL SPECIALLY GIVE HER 2 CLICKS!

THOSE OTHER TWO ARE PRETTY MEH SO I'LL GIVE HALF A CLICK FOR EACH OF EM.

DAYUM!

AMAZINGLY HOT CHICK SPOTTED!

THE BEST THING TO DO RIGHT NOW IS TO CONTINUE BEING TIMID AND AVERT THEIR GAZES.

NO, NO, STOP. STOP THINKING LIKE THIS.

...AND YET, HERE I WAS, FEELING TOO DEPRESSED TO DO ANYTHING WITHOUT EVEN HAVING A GOOD REASON.

ONODERA,

SAY SOMETHING INTERE-STING!

FUNGYAA!

GOD, I'MSOBORED I'MSOBORED MY MIND'S GOING NUMB!!

NO ONE WILL EVEN LOOK MY WAY.

OF COURSE NOT. THEY'RE ALL TOO BUSY BOLDLY FORGING THEIR OWN PATHS IN LIFE.

WHO AM I LOOKING FOR?

IT'S NOT AS IF ANYBODY'LL MAGICALLY SHOW UP AND HELP ME.

...BUT EVEN SO, I CAN'T HELP BUT LOOK AT THESE PEOPLE AS IF I'M TRYING TO CLING ONTO THEM.

ZZZ

ZZZ

PUNPUN'S MIND COULD ONLY FOCUS ON THE COLDNESS OF THE NORTHERN WINDS.

EVEN THOUGH THE WINDS WERE ALREADY MIXED WITH A HINT OF THE COMING SPRING,

11

...BUT PUNPUN COULD NOT BRING HIMSELF TO CROSS THE WHITE LINE.

I GUESS THAT'S JUST HOW MUCH OF A PERSON I AMOUNT TO IN THE END...

PERHAPS EVERYTHING COULD BE SOLVED WITH JUST 2~3 STEPS FORWARD FROM HERE.

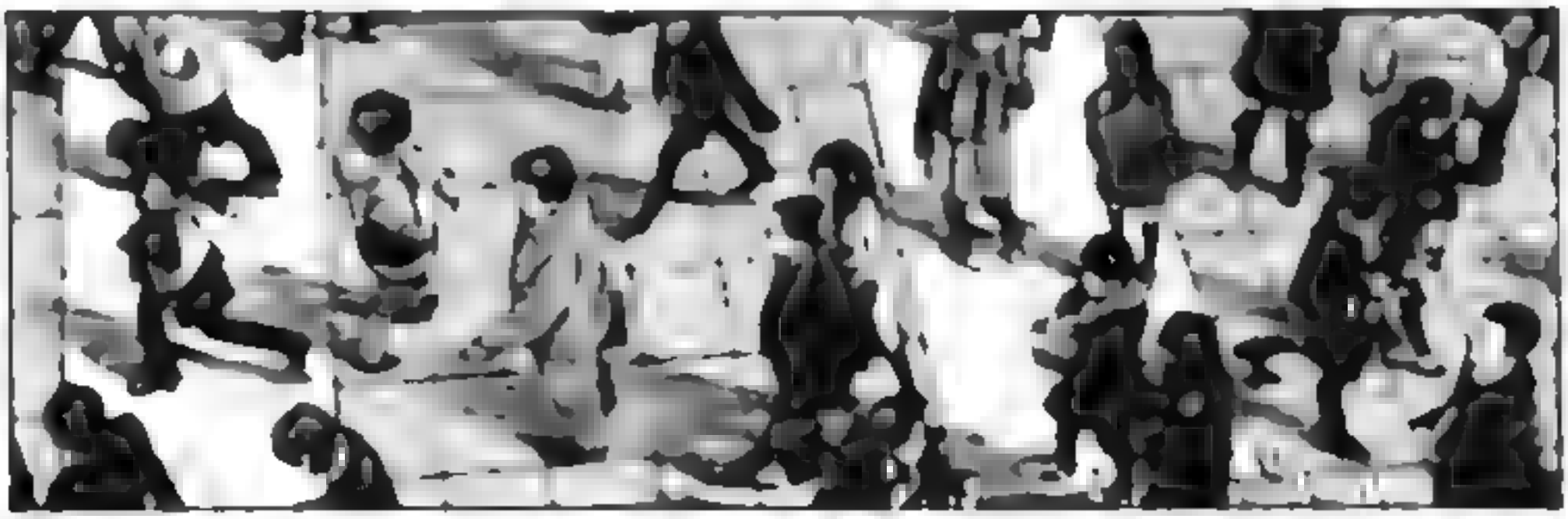
...STILL, ONE POSITIVE THING WAS THAT HIS SIMPLE PART-TIME JOB WAS SUITED TO HIS NATURE.

"PERHAPS I'LL TRY A LITTLE HARDER STARTING TOMORROW," PUNPUN THOUGHT.

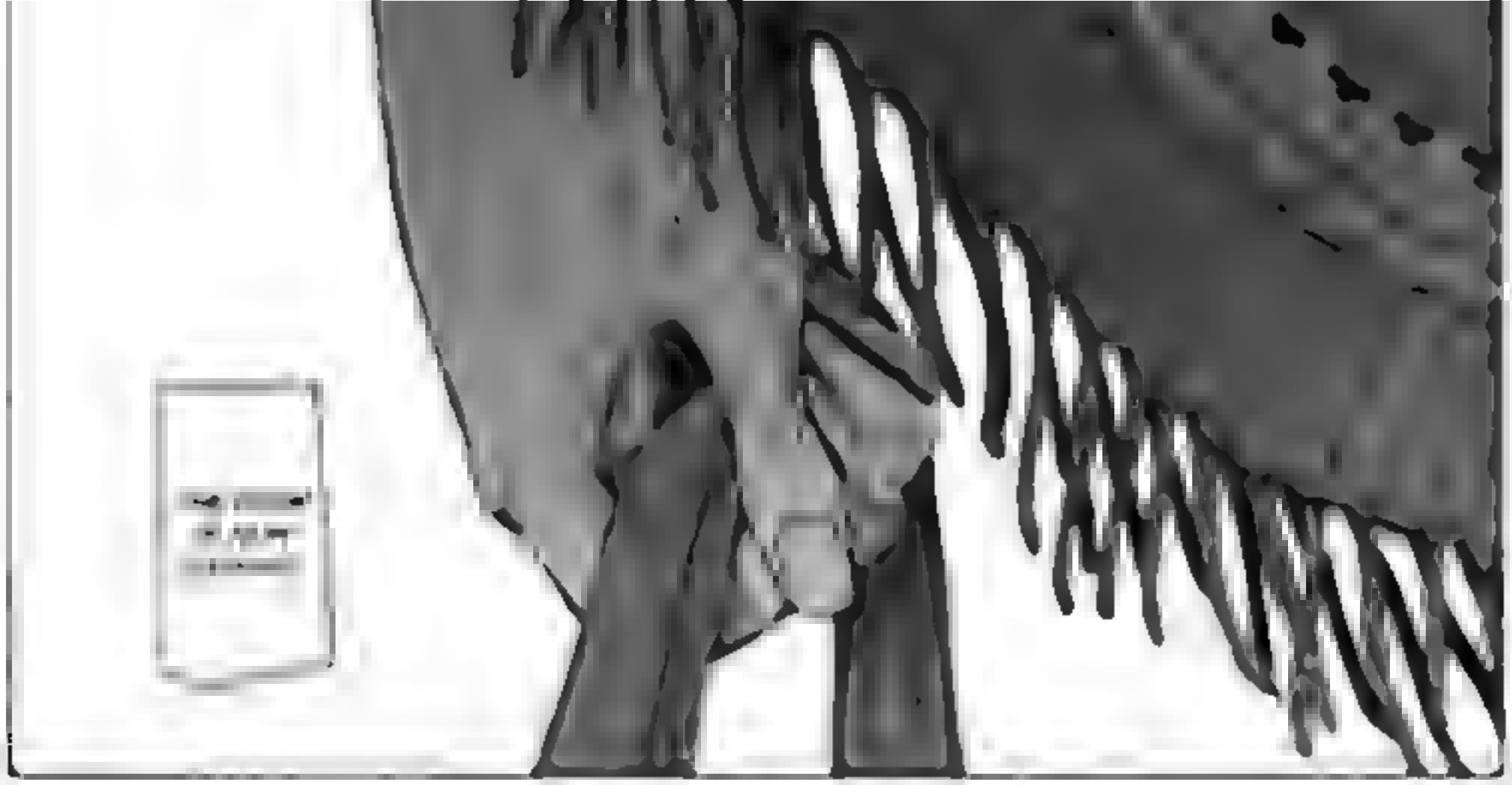
IN FACT, HE EVEN FELT SOMEWHAT BETTER NOW.

THAT HE HAD THOUGHT THE SAME THING YESTERDAY, THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY, AND SO ON AND SO ON.

IT WAS A SECRET TO EVERYONE ELSE.



Ahh!



ひらくドアに
ご注意
優先席

...IT'S AIKO.

ACTO

IT'S AIKO!
IT'S AIKO!
IT'S AIKO!

IT'S AIKO...

4

BOO!

AIKO...

女性専用車

...

...AIKO!?

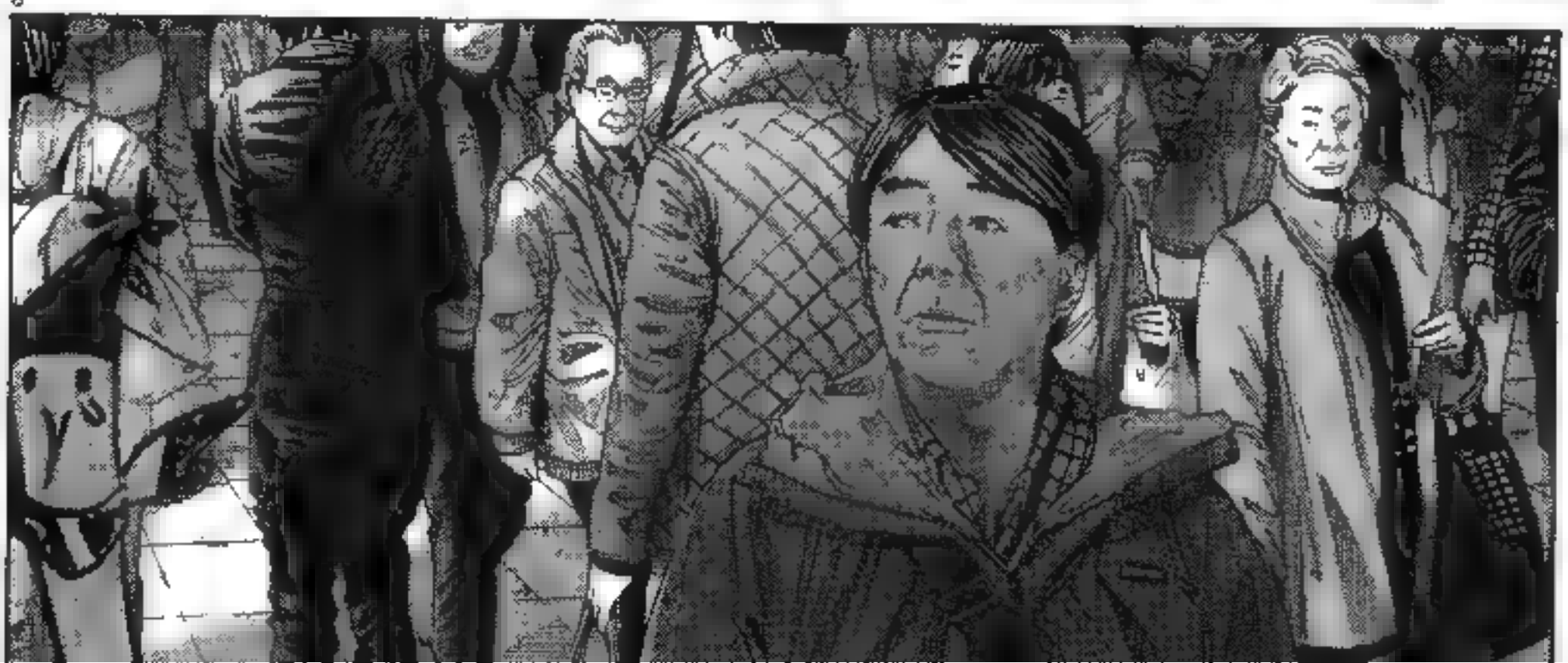
4

AIKO!!!

のりこし時様
Face Adjustment

AIKO!

AIKO!



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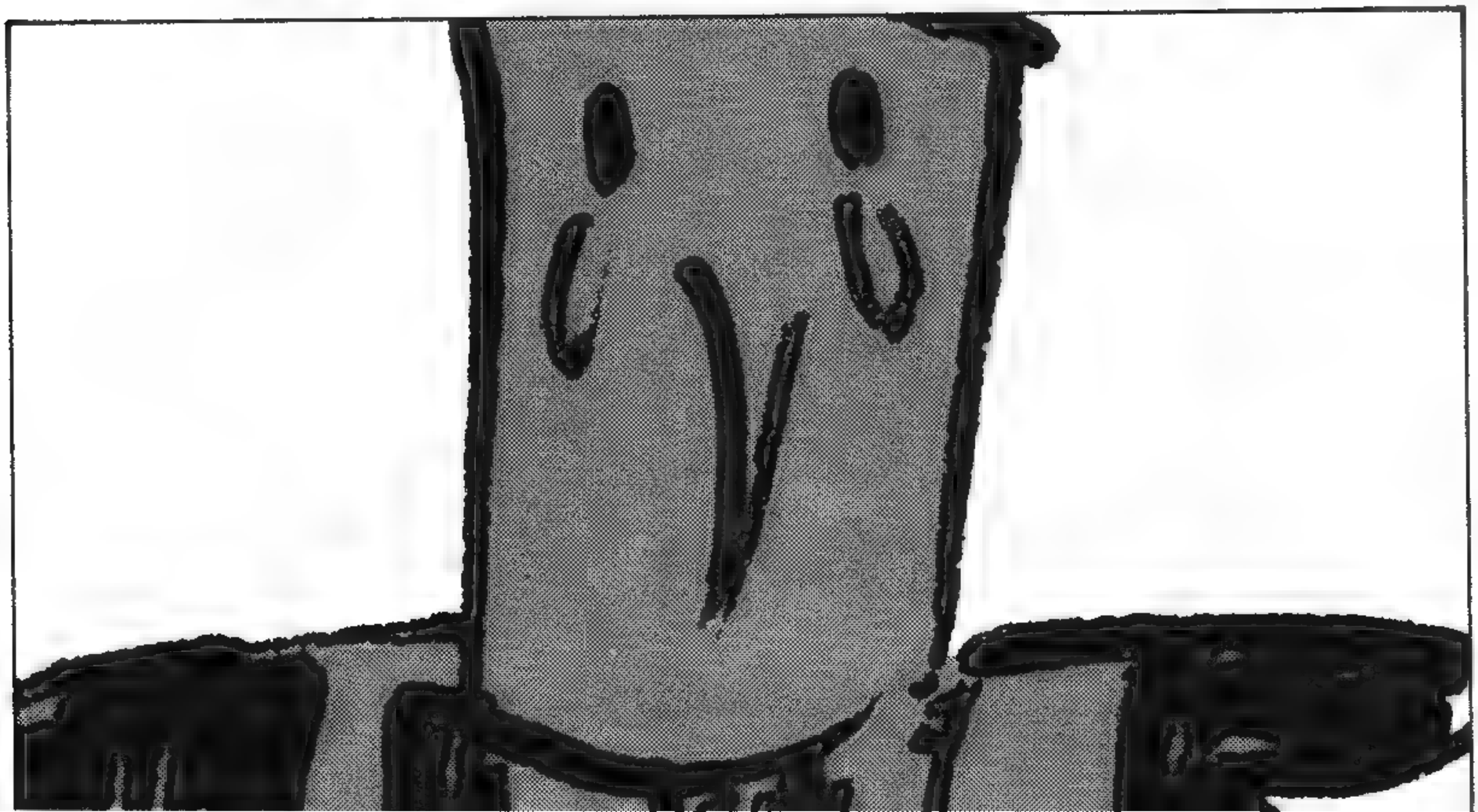
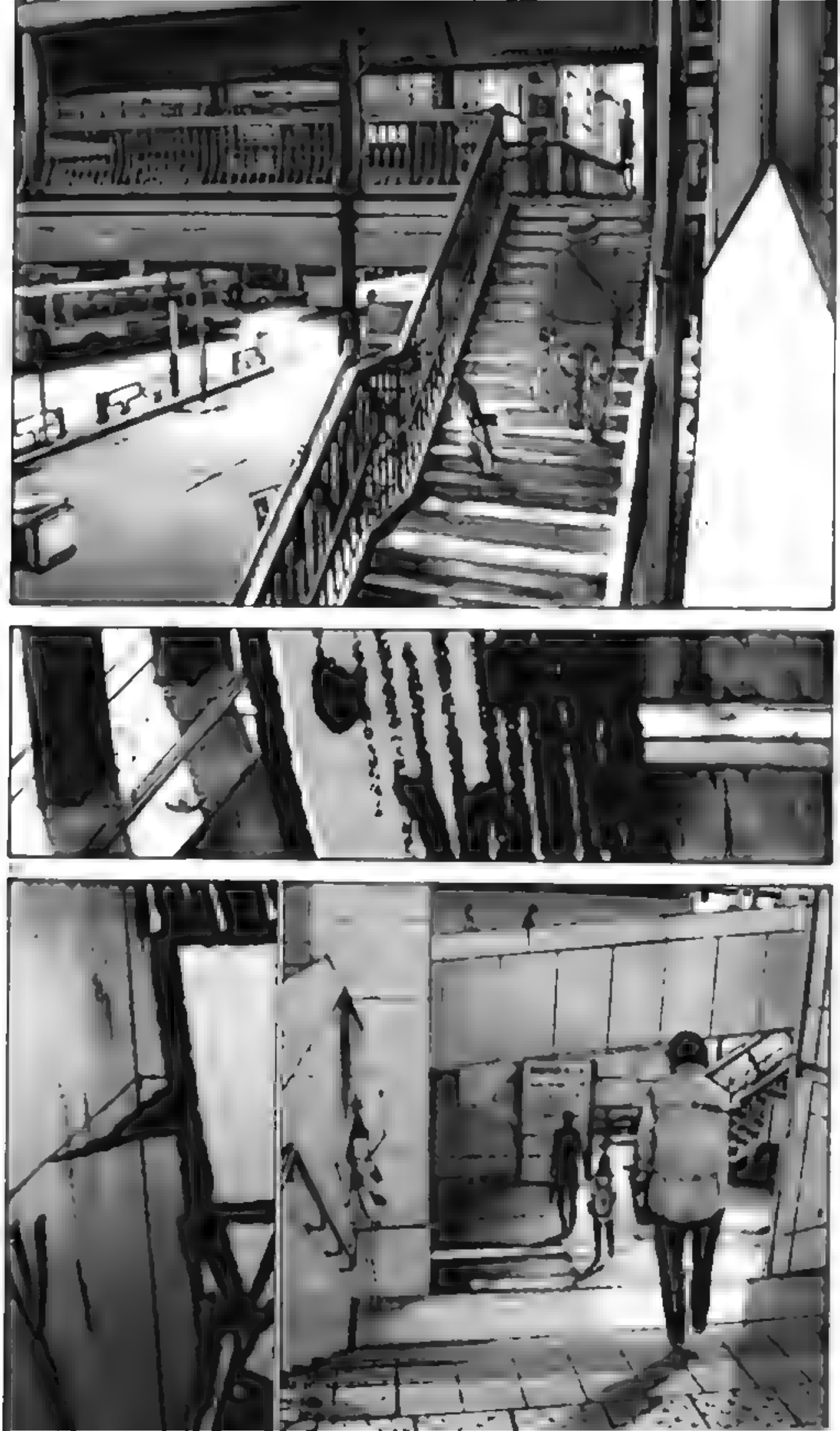


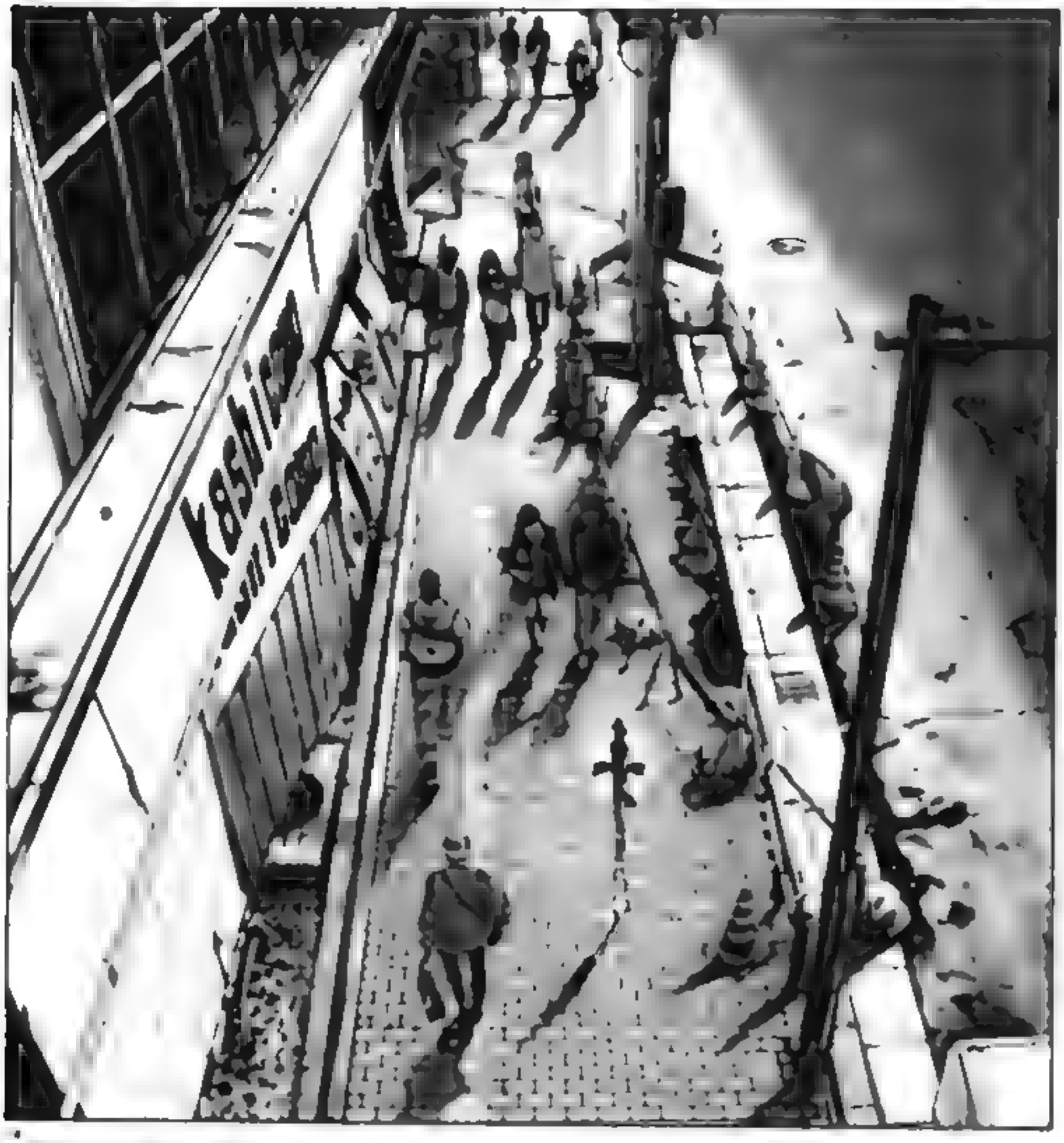
ョンビング

税は心で簡単な口座振替で

貯蓄納税連合組合



AIKO,



WAS NOWHERE
TO BE FOUND.

HOWEVER, PUNPUN DID REALIZE ONE THING FOR CERTAIN.

AND THAT WAS THE FACT THAT AIKO WASN'T JUST SOME FIGMENT OF HIS MIND,

PUNPUN REALIZED THIS SINGLE VERY OBVIOUS FACT.

IN THE SAME WORLD AND IN THE SAME TIME THAT HE HAD BEEN LIVING IN FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS.

BUT SHE WAS REALLY LIVING SOMEWHERE OUT THERE,

賃貸 1K アパート 2階角部屋！

ハイツ宍戸

賃料/月　礼金1ヶ月　敷金1ヶ月

25,000円 共益費1,000円

(201号室)

4.5帖

6帖

賃貸 1K アパート 閑静な住宅街！

UNLIKE A CERTAIN SOMEBODY,

AIKO WAS NOW LIVING AS A PROPER ADULT, POSSIBLY SOMEWHERE IN THIS VERY CITY...

JUST WHAT HAVE I BEEN DOING FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS?

賃貸 1K Apartments

2nd Floor Room!

(201号室)

Shishido Heights

Monthly House Rent:

¥25,000

MONTHLY MAINTENANCE FEES: ¥1000

4.5帖

6帖

徒歩6分

●号室面積/25㎡
●間取 /水回・暖房
●築年数 /昭和55年
●契約期間/2年間
●礼金 3 /敷金入 1,600円/2年

賃貸・管理 宍戸不動産

TEL
FAX

17

EVEN THOUGH THERE'S NOTHING MORE I COULD LOSE...

EVEN THOUGH NOTHING WILL COME FROM WAITING...

JUST WHAT HAVE I BEEN SO AFRAID OF...?

AH.

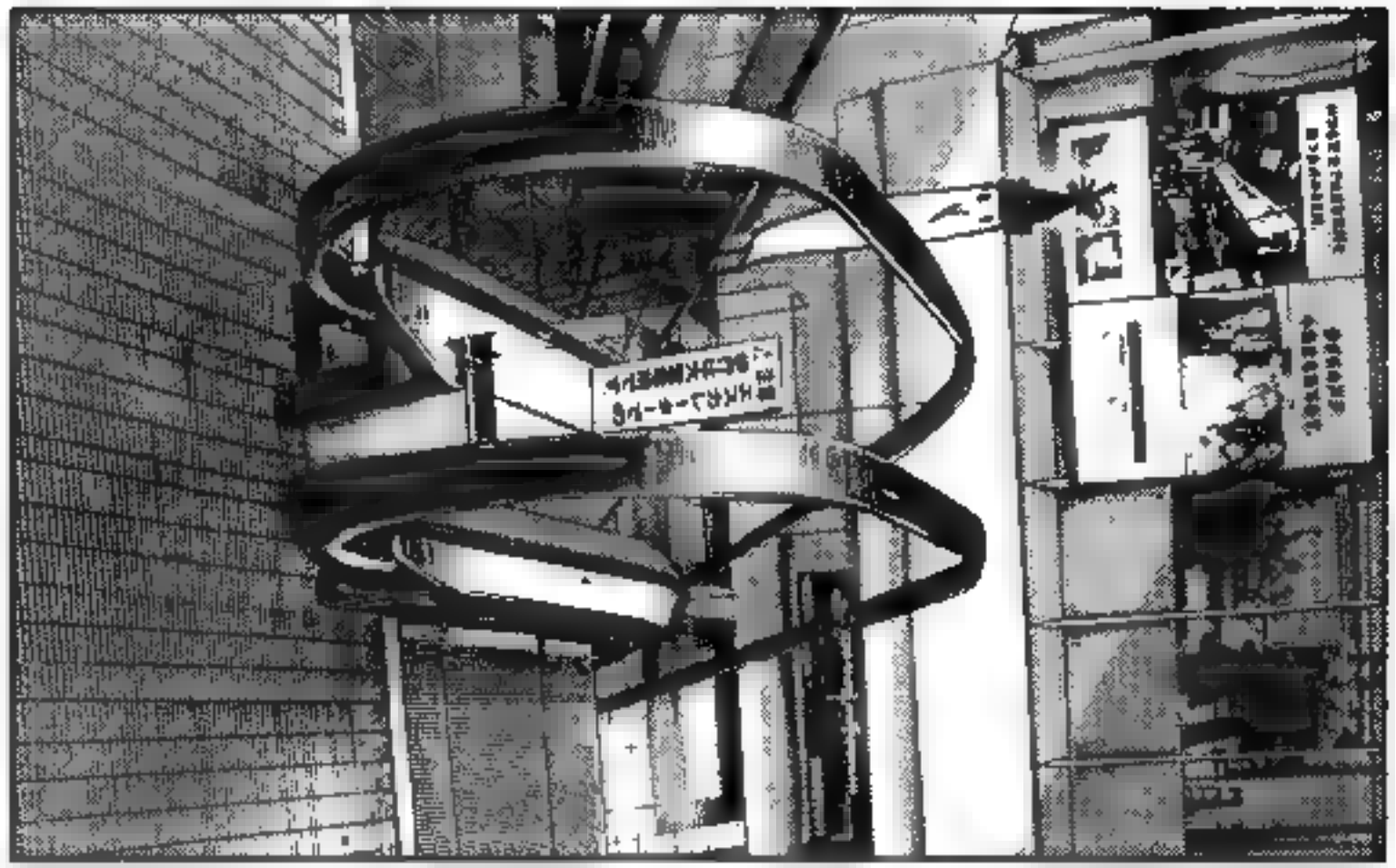
WELCOME

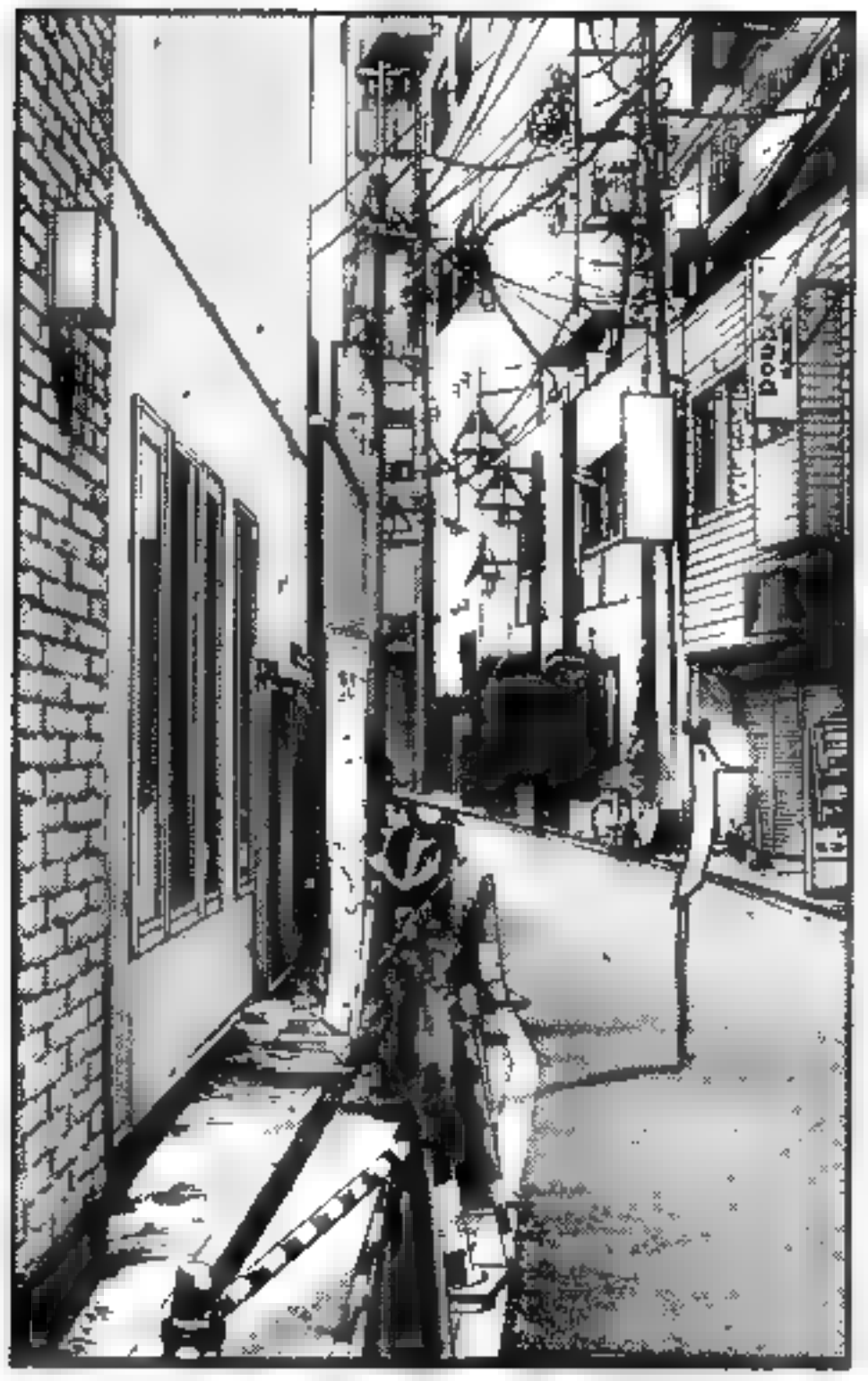
PLEASE, COME IN AND TAKE A SEAT.

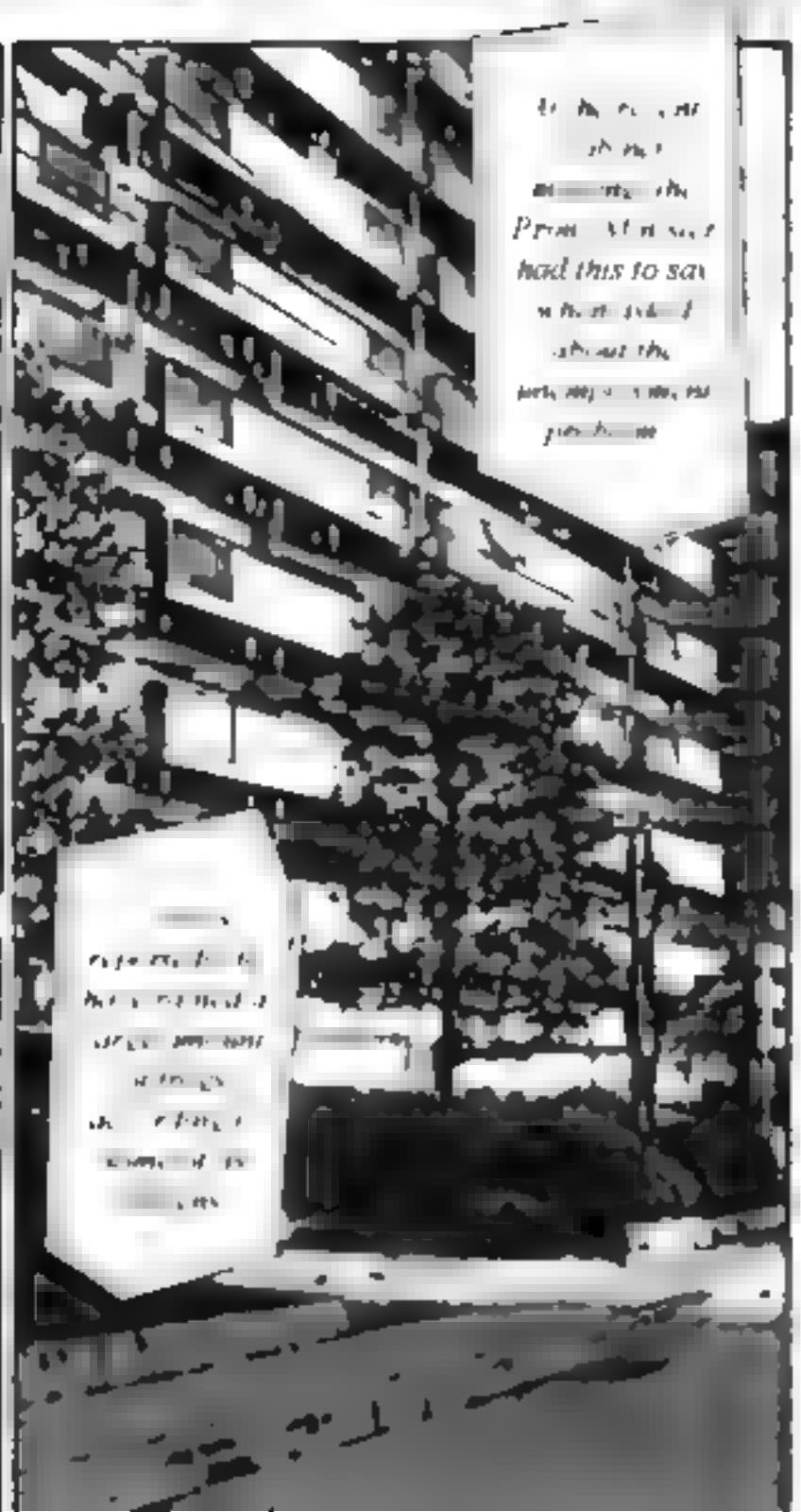
HM?

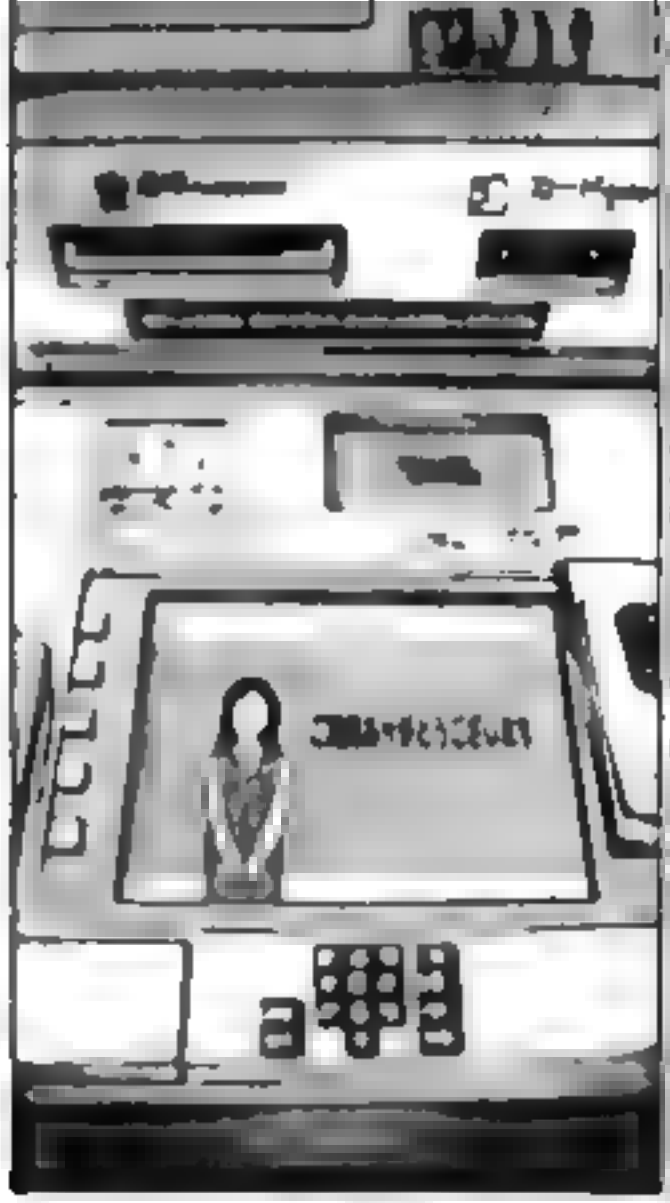
THE 25 000 YEN ROOM ON THE SIGN OUT FRONT?

WELL, CERTAINLY. I CAN SHOW YOU THE PLACE...






803 ONODERA



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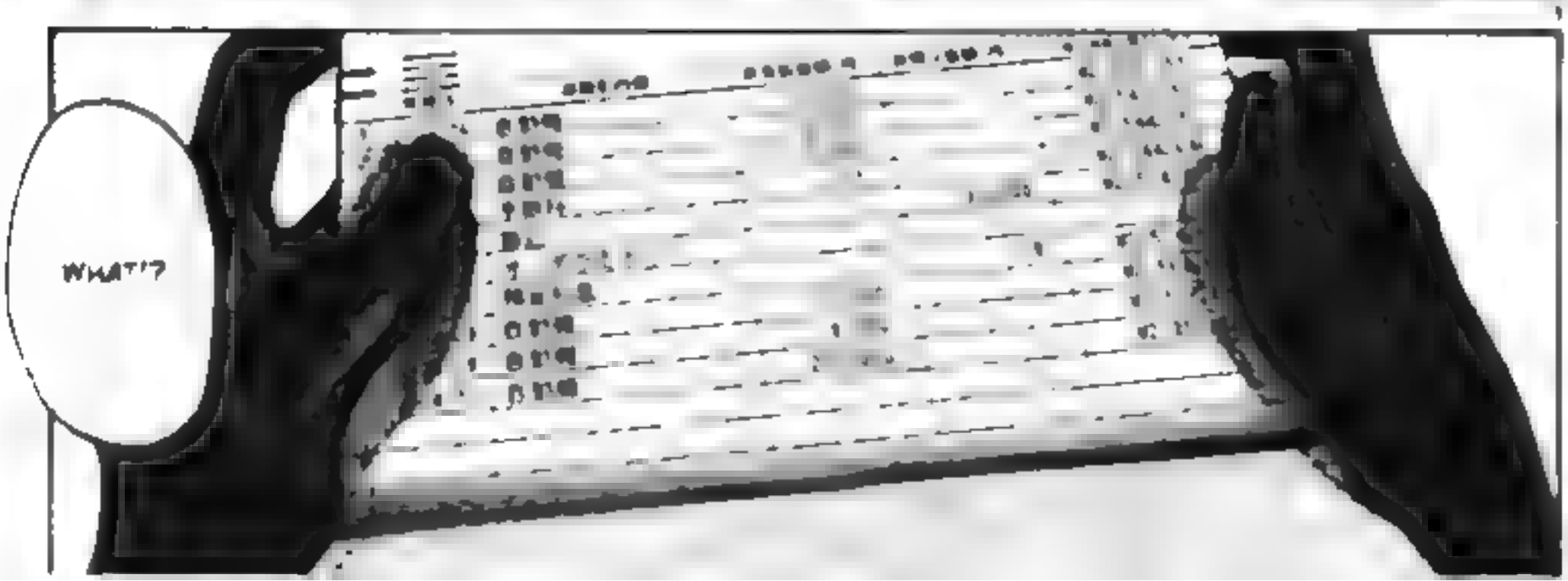
CARD SERVICE

IERE


WHAT!?

YOU

YOU ALREADY DECIDED ON A PLACE!?

WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY ANYTHING TO US ABOUT THIS BEFORE!?

WE..L.

I WON'T OBJECT IF THIS IS SOMETHING THAT YOU'VE THOUGHT OVER CAREFULLY AND DECIDED,

BUT UMM

OK!!

YUUCHI!

SAY SOMETHING!

I'm No1 Strong guy in USA!!

TO BE HONEST, I WAS A LITTLE WORRIED ABOUT THE RENT OF THE CURRENT ROOM YOU'RE LIVING IN BUT...

I THOUGHT THAT YOU COULD COME MOVE TO OOFUNA AS LONG AS YOU DIDN'T MIND THE PLACE TOO MUCH

. HM?

ISN'T THIS .. YOUR MOTHER'S SAVINGS ACCOUNT?

BUT YOU HAVEN'T EVEN FOUND YOURSELF A JOB YET

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE FINE GIVING THIS TO ME?

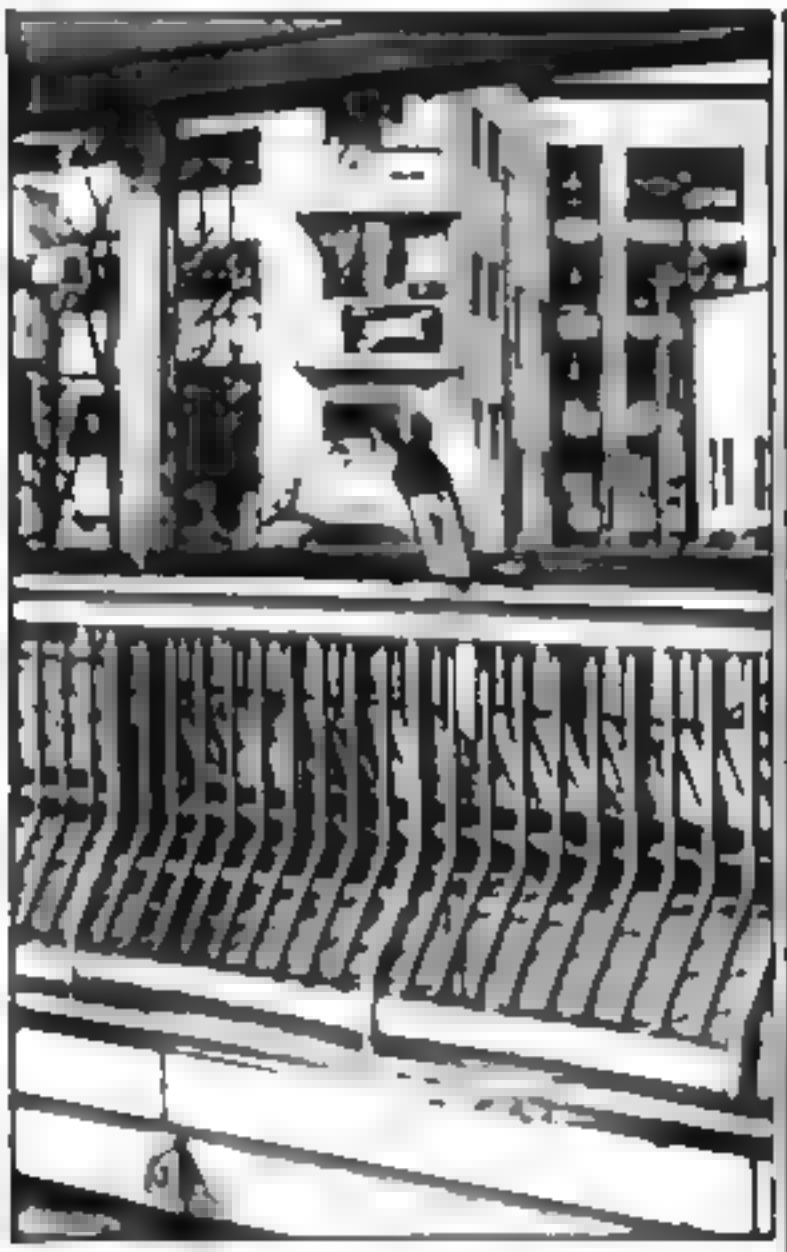
5

"ABSOLUTELY NOT! I'LL BE PERFECTLY FINE!"

ARE YOU REALLY SURE?

DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE PUSHING YOURSELF A BIT TOO HARD?

DEIBPO
ワクワク



0101

I'LL NOW NEED TO EXPLAIN THE SPECIFICS OF THE CONTRACT SO PLEASE TAKE A SEAT

AH, WELCOME BACK.

REPAIRS, WE'LL HANDLE ALL OF THAT SO JUST LET US KNOW IF THERE ARE ANY PROBLEMS AND WE'LL GET IT FIXED RIGHT

THE PLACE IS CONVENIENTLY

SORRY FOR ASKING YOU OVER AND OVER AGAIN

I MEAN,

THE OLD MAN WHO USED TO LIVE THERE DIED IN THAT ROOM...

WITH SUCH A SIMPLE ACT, PUNPUN FELT HE HAD BECOME JUST A LITTLE MORE ADULT NOW.

THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME PUNPUN SIGNED A CONTRACT WITH HIS SEAL AND MONEY.

WHETHER THEY CALLED HIM IMMATURE, CREEPY, OR MENTALLY IMBALANCED,

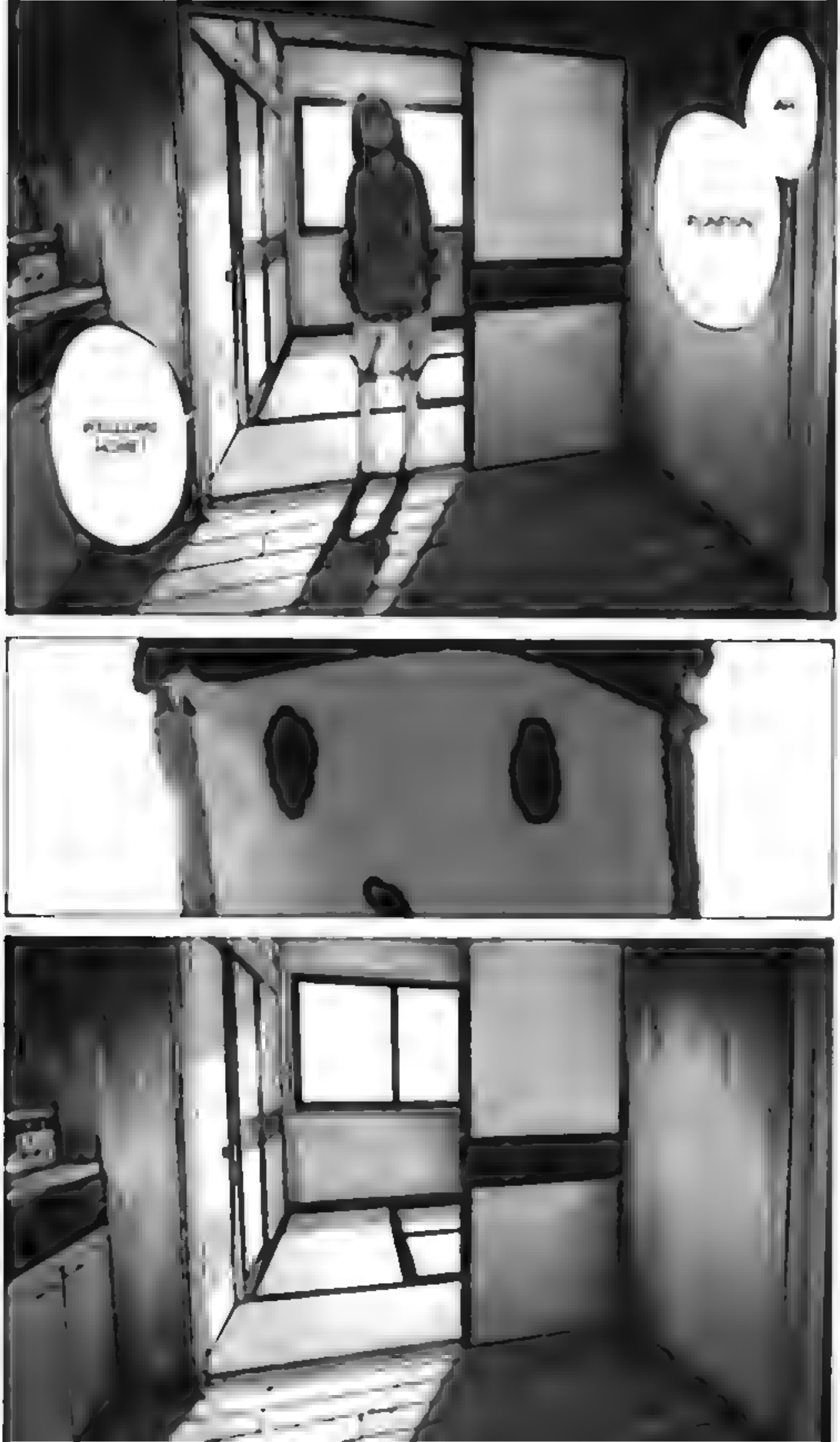
IT WOULDN'T MATTER BECAUSE HE ALREADY KNEW THAT BEST.

EVEN IF SOMEONE WERE TO TALK BEHIND HIS BACK, HE WASN'T ABOUT TO GIVE THEM ANY ATTENTION.

EVEN THOUGH HIS MOTIVES WERE SELFISH AND IMPURE, HE WAS SURPRISED AT HOW ACTIVE HE WAS BEING AT CARRYING OUT HIS GOAL.

OPENED EFFORTLESSLY WITH JUST A SINGLE SMALL KEY.

THE UNIMPRESSIVE DOOR OF HIS CHEAP 25,000 YEN APARTMENT.



HUH?

THIS ROOM...

WILL BE A ROOM FOR AIKO AND I TO LIVE TOGETHER IN.

BUT THAT WASN'T SUCH A BIG DEAL FOR HIM AT THE MOMENT.

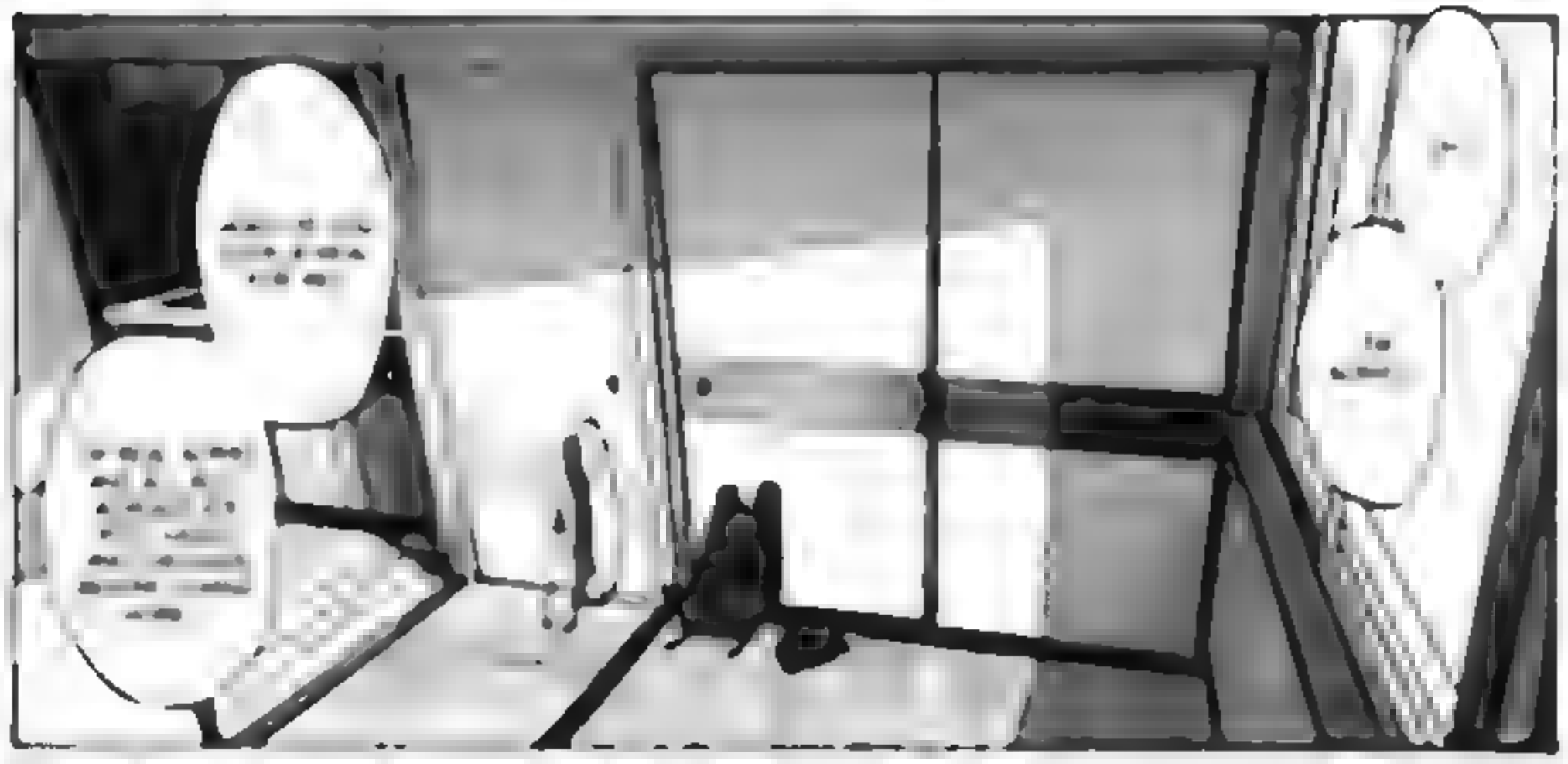
EVEN IF HE DID FIND HER AGAIN, HE DOUBTED HE WOULD ACTUALLY BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING.

AGHH!

BUT THE MAIN POINT WAS THAT HE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO TRY.

IT WAS HARD FOR HIM TO PHRASE IT OUT PROPERLY.

WELCOME HOME, SWEETIE!



IT'S FINE, I'LL JUST THROW IT ALL OUT THEN.

YOU NEVER SAID YOU'D BE THIS LATE ..

ER, DON'T YOU?

WHA? THAT'S RIDICULOUS!

SAITOU THIS, SAITOU THAT... WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO OUT WITH SAITOU IF HE'S THAT IMPORTANT TO YOU!!

AND YOU SAY YOU WERE

GIRLS TOO!

YOU KNOW!

DID YOU JUST CALL ME WHAT I THINK YOU CALLED ME?

OH, COME ON!

DO YOU REALLY NOT TRUST ME THAT MUCH!? JUST WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO PLEASE YOU!?

YOU BRING HOME GIRLS THAT YOU WERE OUT DRINKING WITH, DON'T YOU!? THAT'S WHY YOU ALWAYS TELL ME TO LET YOU KNOW BEFORE COMING OVER, ISN'T IT!?

NO! DON'T TOUCH ME!

I KNOW WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON!

YOU USED TO TELL ME YOU LOVED ME AND EVEN PATTED MY HEAD ALL THE TIME BUT YOU BARELY EVEN KISS ME ANYMORE...

WHY CAN'T YOU UNDER-STAND EVEN THOUGH I LOVE YOU THIS MUCH...

THERE'S NO POINT IF YOU ONLY DO IT WHEN I TELL YOU TO...

THAT THE LOVEY-DOVEY COUPLE NEXT DOOR WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A DUMBASS AND A BITCH.

PUNPUN HOPED FROM THE BOTTOM OF HIS HEART,

AN~

AN~

AN~

AN~

AN~

AN~

AN~

AN~

AN~

AN~

IF THEY WEREN'T...

THEN SOMEHOW... THINGS JUST FELT UTTERLY HOPELESS.

AN~

AN~

AN~

PUNPUN WONDERED WHAT WAS RUNNING THROUGH THE MIND OF THAT OLD MAN AS HE DIED ALONE HERE IN THIS ROOM.

AN~

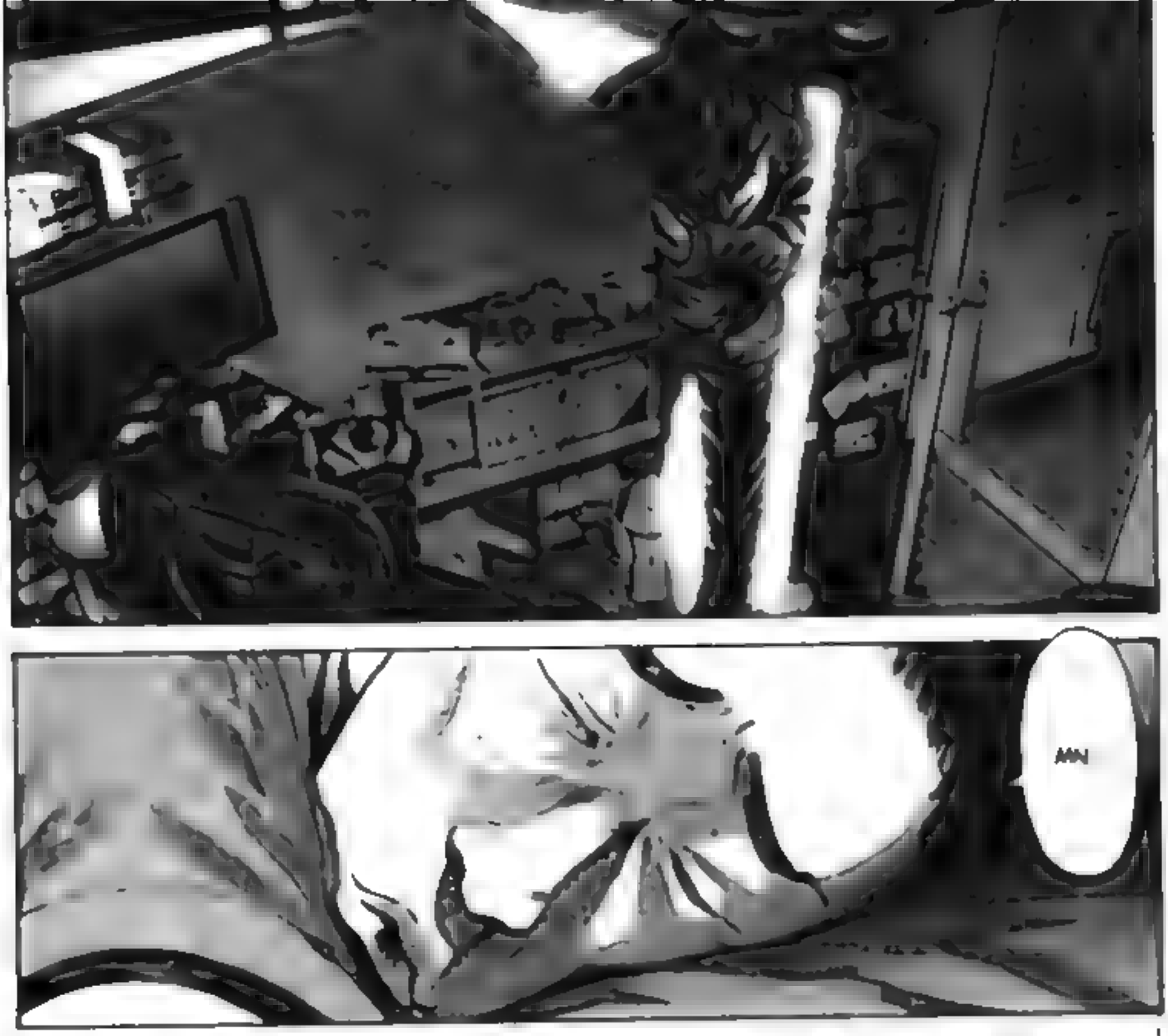
AN~

AN~

AND THAT IDEA WAS...

2 YEARS FROM NOW, WHEN HE WOULD RENEW THE CONTRACT FOR THE ROOM...

IF NOTHING HAD CHANGED BY THEN, HE DECIDED HE WOULD KILL HIMSELF.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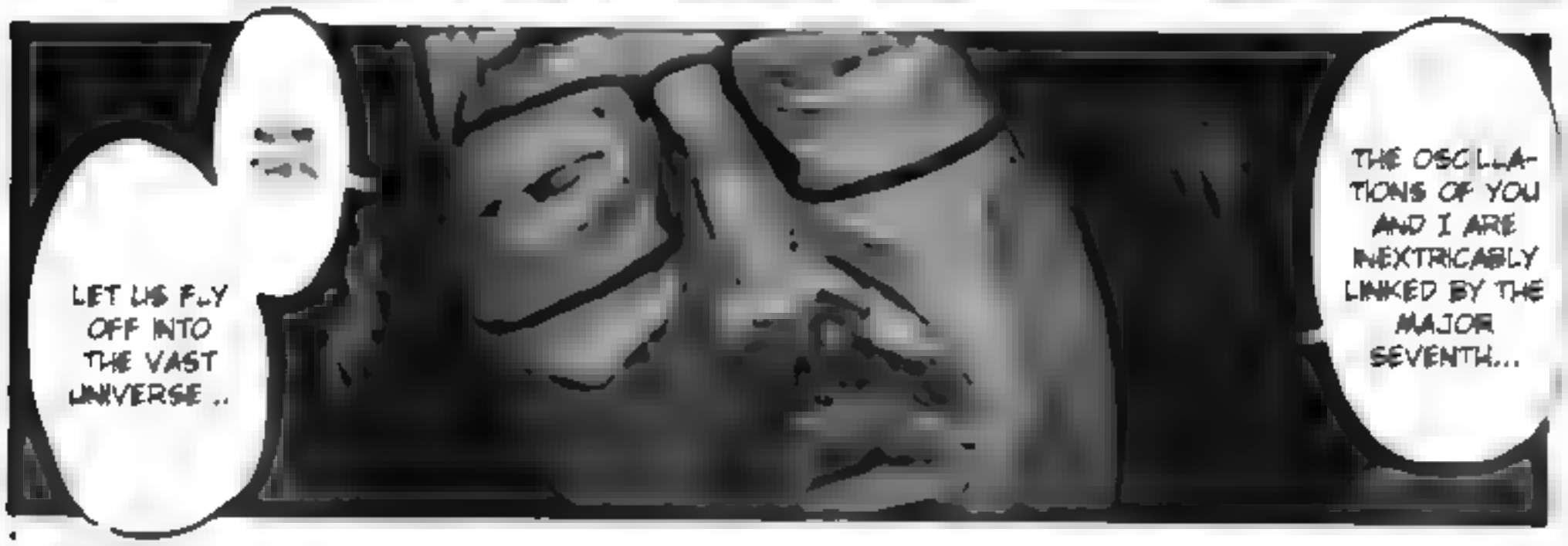

LET US FLY OFF INTO THE VAST UNIVERSE ..
THE OSCILLATIONS OF YOU AND I ARE INEXTRICABLY LINKED BY THE MAJOR SEVENTH...

I'VE GOT A PART-TIME JOB STARTING

NGHH, DOING MY DAILY SIT-UPS ROUTINE EVEN IN A TIME LIKE THIS~ DAMN,

ONE-TWO! ONE-TWO!

I'M GONNA BE LATE!

RRRRR

RRRRR

RRRRR

RRRRR

チャクシ

SO PLEASE LEAVE YOUR NAME AND MESSAGE AT THE SOUND OF THE BEEP.

I'M NOT AT HOME RIGHT NOW.

RRR...

CLICK

ONODERA! GOOD TO SEE YA!

LET'S DO OUR BEST AT WORK TODAY!

IT MAY STILL BE NIGHT OUT BUT THE SUN WILL DEFINITELY RISE SOON ENOUGH!

YO! GOOD JOB, SUNSHINE!

SO .. HOW WAS YOUR FIRST DAY ON THE JOB?

BUT NONE OF THE CUTE CHICKS AT UNIVERSITY ARE LOOKING MY WAY...!

DAMMIT! AT THIS RATE, I'M NEVER GONNA GET A GIRL-FRIEND!

HEY, ONO-D... MIND HEARING ME OUT ABOUT A PROBLEM?

I'M MY OWN HARSHEST CRITIC AND ALL BUT I'D SAY THAT MY ABS ARE PROBABLY 3RD IN THE WORLD WHEN IT COMES TO BEING CUTE.

DAMN, ARE YOU SERIOUS?

154CM IS ALMOST HOW TALL MY MOM IS!

SO DON'T SWEAT IT...?

WHA!?

THE LARGEST BREASTS RECORDED BY GUINESS WAS 154CM!?

SPEAKING OF BIZARRE EVENTS, I JUST HAD THE WE RDEST DREAM...

I DREAMT THAT MY ROOM WAS FILLED WITH BRIGHT DIVINE LIGHT!

WHAT A MYSTERIOUS ADVENTURE, THIS WORLD IS!

I SEE...

THE WORLD REALLY IS FULL OF THE BIZARRE AND UNEXPLAINED.

HE SAID, "THERE IS STILL MUCH FOR YOU TO DO..." OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT

AND THEN OUT OF NOWHERE APPEARED THIS PINK ELEPHANT...? NO WAIT, MAYBE IT WAS SOME BABE IN A SWIMSUIT..

AND AT THAT INSTANT, IT WAS AS IF MY SOUL HAD THIS .. DIVINE REVELATION!

AGH, I FORGET WHAT EXACTLY APPEARED BUT ANYHOO, THIS THING STARTED TALKING TO ME...!

I CAN HEAR IT NOW... THE VOICES OF THE PEOPLE CALLING FOR HELP!

WHAT DO I DO !?

DAMN IT MAHURA YOU IDIOT! WHY DIDN'T YOU REALIZE IT UNTIL TODAY!

AM I REALLY GOD'S CHOSEN ONE ?

AH.

WHAT'S WITH THAT STIFF SMILE YOU'RE GIVING ME?

C'MON MAN, I'M GONNA BURST INTO TEARS IF THAT'S HOW YOU'RE GOING TO RESPOND, YOU KNOW?

ALRIGHT.

THAT'S ENOUGH JOKING AROUND FOR NOW

BUT THERE REALLY IS SOMETHING THAT I'VE BEEN WORRYING ABOUT

I'M AN ECON MAJOR BUT I FEEL LIKE I COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT ECON

MY PARENTS ARE BOTH TEACHERS Y'KNOW?

SO THEN I THOUGHT ABOUT JUST GETTING A TEACHER'S LICENSE EVEN IF IT IS KIND OF A HASSLE

AND IT WAS LIKE BAM! THIS FOG AROUND ME SUDDENLY CLEARED UP!

I COULD FINALLY SEE THE WIDE ROAD OPENING UP IN FRONT OF ME!

BUT...!

BUT THERE'S JUST THIS SENSE OF HESITANCE LURKING ABOUT

IS IT REALLY FINE FOR A PERSON'S PATH IN LIFE TO BE SO SIMPLE!?

BUT THEN AGAIN, THERE'S ALSO A PART OF ME THAT JUST WANTS TO ABANDON MY DESIRE TO LIVE IN THE FAST LANE!

YOU SEEM SO CAREFREE AND WITHOUT ANY WORRIES.

DON'T YOU EVER FEEL INSECURE? WHERE DO YOU GET THAT CONFIDENCE OF YOURS?

BY ANYONE OR ANYPLACE

BUT! UNLIKE YOU, I'M JUST A DREAMER AT HEART!

IS THAT JUST WHAT BEING COOL IS ALL ABOUT,

YOUR LIFE-STYLE, BRO.

ALTHOUGH PUNPUN DIDN'T REALLY WANT TO THINK ABOUT WHAT THE POINT OF HAVING DREAMS THAT COULD NEVER COME TRUE WAS...

IT'S ALREADY MORNING

BEING COOL WAS MERELY A PAPER-THIN DIFFERENCE AWAY FROM BEING EMPTY.

TO HAVE DREAMS AND WORRIES THAT YOU COULD TALK FRANKLY ABOUT...

IN A WAY, THAT WAS PROBABLY A MORE FULFILLING LIFESTYLE THAN HIS OWN, PUNPUN ADMITTED.

PUNPUN...

YOU HAVE 1 MESSAGE FROM 12:15.

FAILED TO FIND AIKO AGAIN TODAY.

I'M SORRY FOR CALLING SO MANY TIMES,

BUT I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO GET AHOLD OF YOU... I GUESS YOU MUST BE AT WORK RIGHT NOW...?

HELLO

IT'S ME, MIDORI

THERE'S JUST SO MANY STUFF THAT I THINK WE'LL HAVE TO THROW SOME AWAY LIKE YOUR MOTHER'S OLD CLOSET

YOU REALLY DON'T MIND WHAT YUUKO AND I DO WITH THE AL RIGHT?

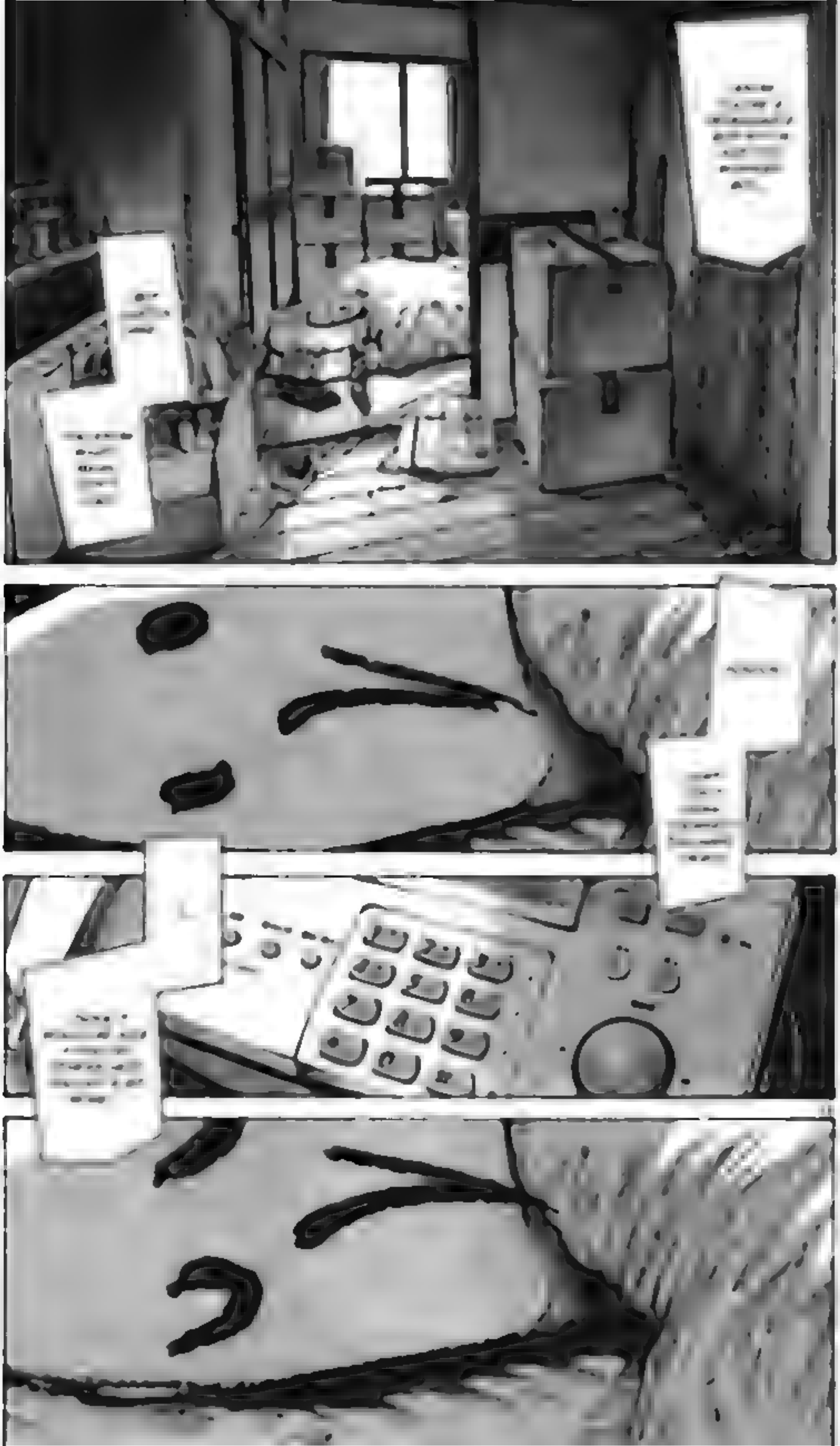
WE JUST GOT THE FURNITURE YOU SENT US

BUT PLEASE DO GET YOURSELF A CELL PHONE SOON, OK?

I'LL PAY FOR IT IF YOU NEED IT

OH ONE MORE THING

SORRY IF I SEEM LIKE I'M PESTER-ING YOU.



PUNPUN WAS VERY EXHAUSTED AGAIN TODAY.

.....

WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?

WE'VE RECEIVED A REPORT ABOUT A MAN WHO'S BEEN SLEEPING HERE SINCE LAST NIGHT SO ..

AH GOOD, YOU WOKE UP.

WHO? WE'RE POLICEMEN, OF COURSE

DID YOU PERHAPS HAVE A BIT TOO MUCH TO DRINK?

THAT'S WONDER-FUL!

A ROUND OF APPLAUSE!

I GIVE YOU MY EARNEST SUPPORT TO YOU MEN!

NOW THEN,

I MUST BE GOING NOW.

FULL SPEED AHEAD!

MIRAGE MODE ACTIVATE!

WHY'RE YOU STARING SO INTENTLY AT MY FACE...?

WHAT, YOU KNOW I'M ALWAYS FULL OF ENERGY!

IF I ONLY HAD A GIRLFRIEND BEFORE SUMMER WOULD BEGIN, IT'D BE NO EXAGGERATION TO CALL ME *INVINCIBLE!*

I MEAN, JUST THINK ABOUT IT

YOU'D THINK THAT WITH SO MUCH FAT THEIR SHIT WOULD GET CAUGHT IN ALL THE ROLLS AS THEY'RE GRUNTING IT OUT ON THE DOHYO !

YO ONO-D

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT A SUMO FIGHTER'S BUTT?

BUT I'VE REALIZED SOME-THING

NO MATTER HOW MUCH I THINK ABOUT IT THE SUMO WORLD WON'T CHANGE

NOTHING ABOUT THIS WORLD WILL CHANGE FROM ME WRACKING MY HEAD OVER THINGS

AND SIMILARILY

BUT NO MATTER HOW MUCH I THINK, IT JUST SEEMS LIKE THIS WORLD WON'T EVER BE PEACEFUL

I'VE ALWAYS PONDERED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE HUMAN RACE

THEN AGAIN, I FEEL LIKE I CAN'T EVEN CONTINUE ON NORMALLY WITH MY LIFE UNLESS I FIND OUT THE ANSWERS TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THESE QUESTIONS THAT POPS UP!

AND JUST TO MAKE THINGS CLEAR, IT'S NOT BECAUSE OF WOMEN OR ANYTHING, ALRIGHT?

YOU KNOW, ONO-D...

BUT TIME'S SUCH A CRUEL THING..

I WISH I COULD JUST STAY A KID NO MATTER WHAT ANYONE SAYS...

EVEN IF YOU TRY YOUR BEST TO RESIST, YOU CAN STILL SLOWLY FEEL YOURSELF TURNING INTO AN ADULT .

YOU PROBABLY CAN'T UNDERSTAND ALL MY SUBTLETIES, ONO-D'

HEH, THIS STUBBORN PART OF ME IS KINDA COOL IF I MAY SAY SO MYSELF!

EVEN THOUGH I KNOW IT'S GONNA BE A REAL PAIN..

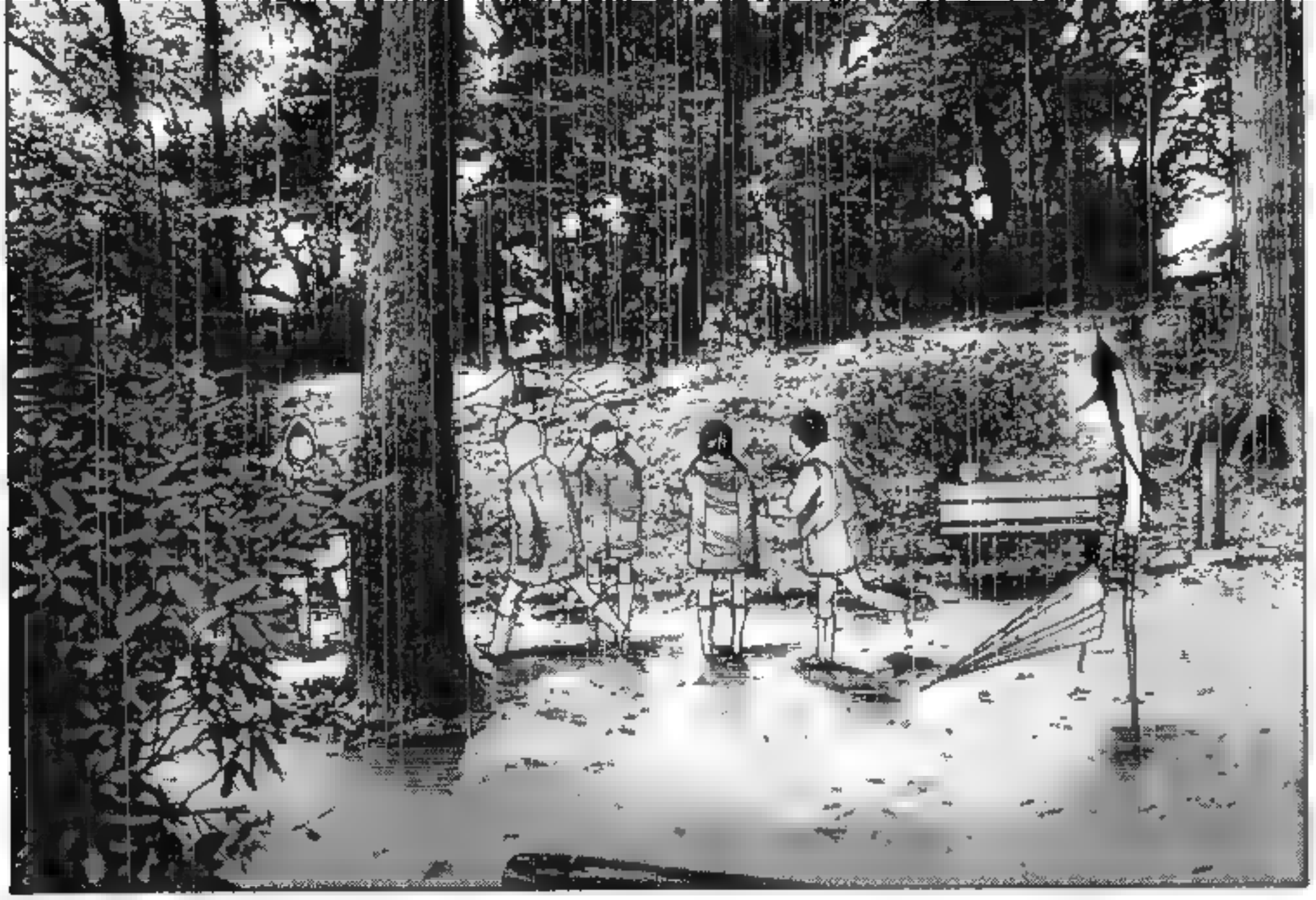
I'VE DECIDED TO START STUDYING MY ASS OFF TO GET MY TEACHER'S LICENSE

GOOD WORK, SUNSET!

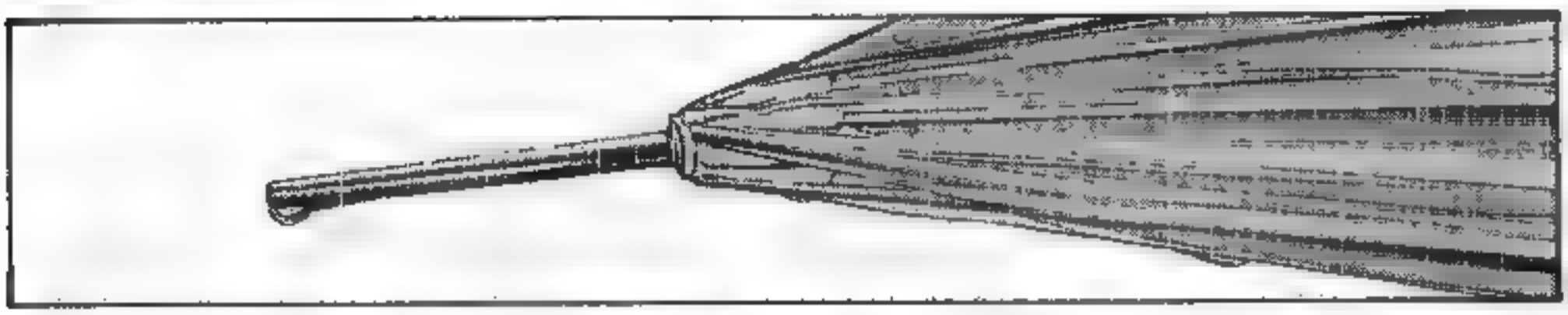
THE YOUNG GROW BIG FROM FROLICK-ING WITH THE NIGHT, YOU KNOW!

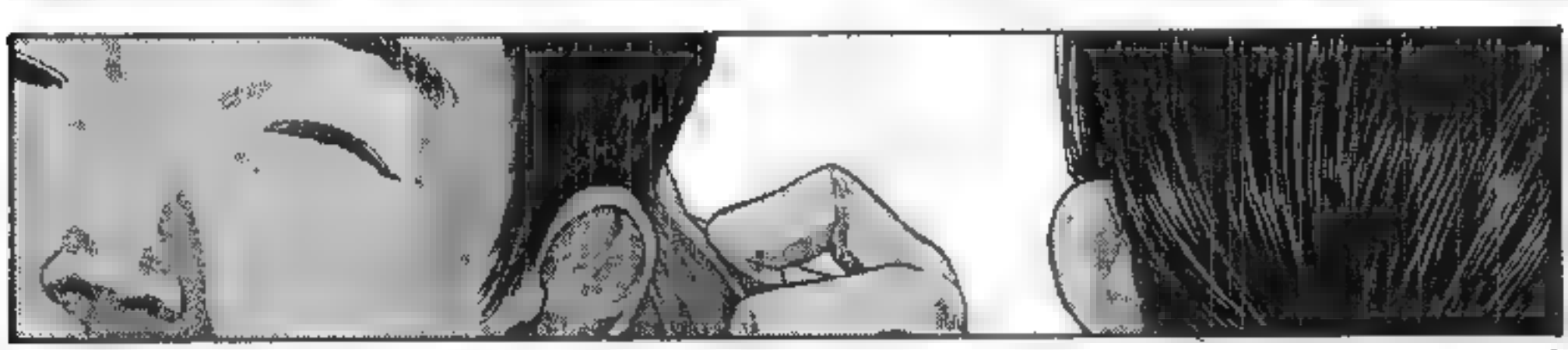
I'VE DECIDED TO SPEND THE NIGHT DOING PAINFUL SIT-UPS WHILE CRYING!

THE CHILDREN PASSED BY, LAUGHING INNOCENTLY



THINKING ABOUT HOW THESE CHILDREN'S HEADS WERE FULL OF BRIGHT HOPES AND DREAMS WAS ENOUGH TO DRIVE PUNPUN TO...





...NO, NEVER MIND. IT DROVE HIM TO NOTHING AT ALL.

IN ANY CASE,

6

FIND HER.

FIND HER.

THE MORE PUNPUN THOUGHT TO HIMSELF THAT THIS SUMMER SHOWER COULDN'T LAST FOREVER, THE MORE THE DOWNPOUR SEEMED TO CONTINUE ENDLESSLY WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST INDICATION OF STOPPING.

BUT AIKO WAS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND.

ONO-DERA!

YOU SEEM SO WEARY TODAY!

ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP? HAHA!

ONODERA!

YOU ARE STILL A VIRGIN, RIGHT?

HA, I CAN JUST TELL BY THAT GLOOMY LOOK YOU'RE GIVING ME!

BUT DON'T WORRY, THAT'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT! IN FACT, I'M JEALOUS AT HOW YOU'VE GOT AN ENTIRE WORLD THAT'S WAITING TO BE EXPLORED!

YOU SHOULD DEFINITELY GO OUT AND HAVE SOME SEX!

THE MINOR QUIBBLES AND WORRIES OF YOUTH CAN ALL BE SOLVED WITH SEX!

IT FEELS GREAT, YOU KNOW!

KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

IF YOU'RE EVER GOING TO A MIXER, BE SURE TO INVITE ME

IF YOU DO, I'LL BE SURE TO SHOW YOU SUREFIRE TIPS ON HOW TO SCORE! HAHA!

'COURSE, I'D BE FINE WITH MIDDLE SCHOOL OR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL KIDS AS WELL!

FEELING WELL?

ALRIGHT, JUST LEAVE THE REST TO ME!

AND DON'T FORGET WHAT WE TALKED EARLIER, ALRIGHT!?

kashikomo

HE KNEW THAT OTHERS DIDN'T HAVE IT IN FOR HIM OR ANYTHING, BUT THAT WASN'T THE PROBLEM.

IT WASN'T THAT KIND OF PROBLEM.

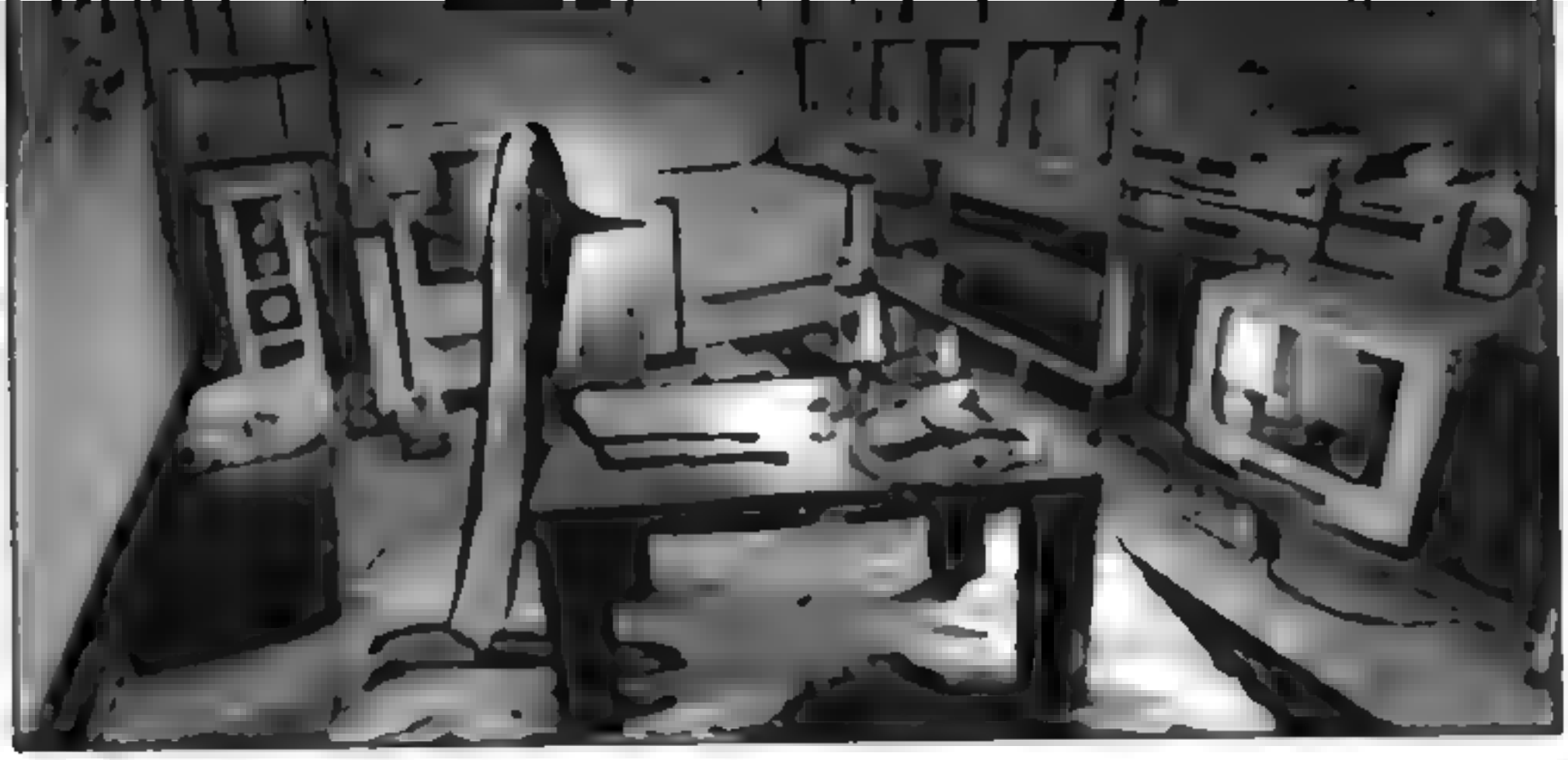
HE WOULD CHANT, "DEAR GOD, DEAR GOD, TWICE-TWICE NOW," AND...

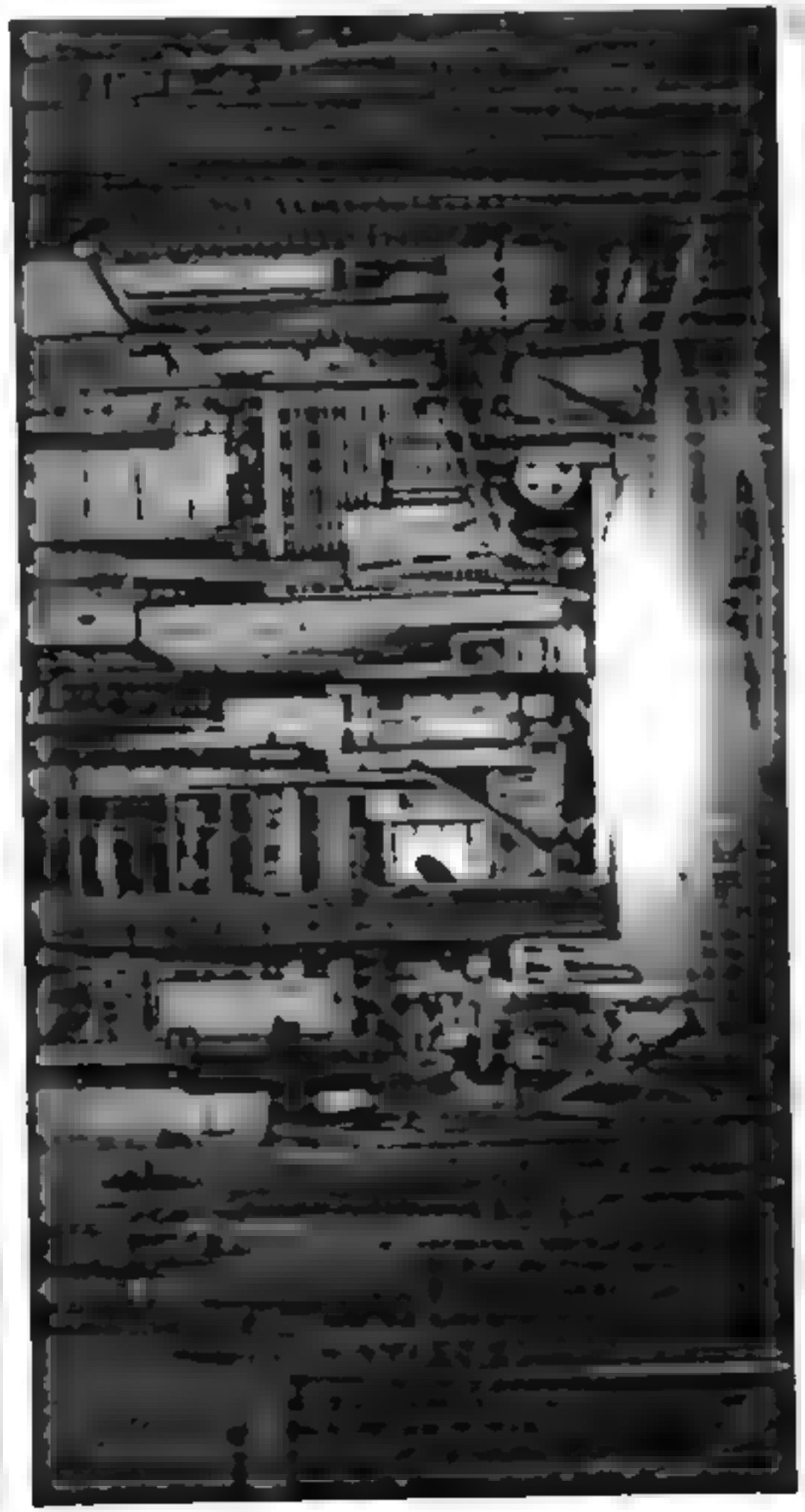
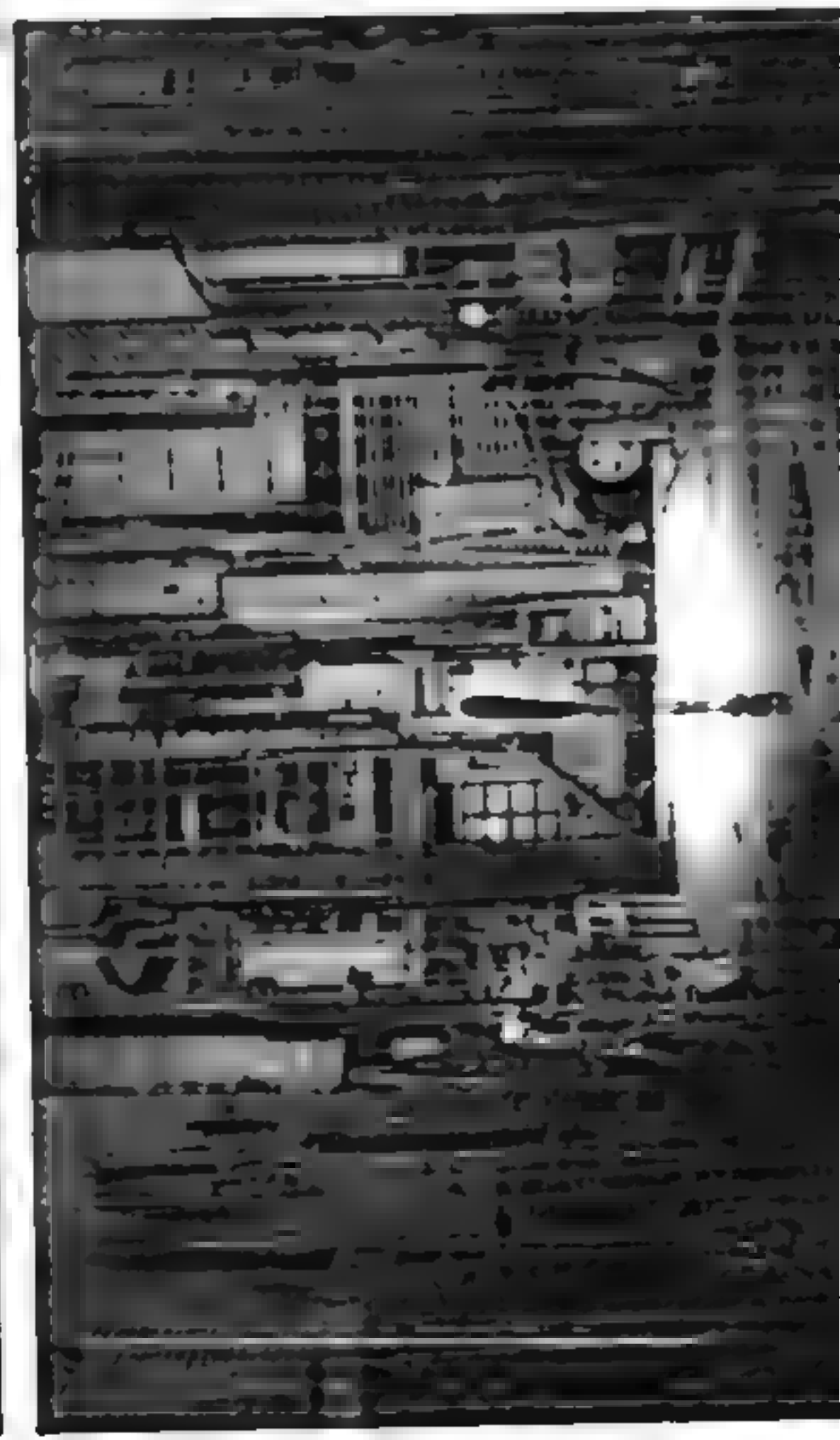
IN THIS LIFE THESE

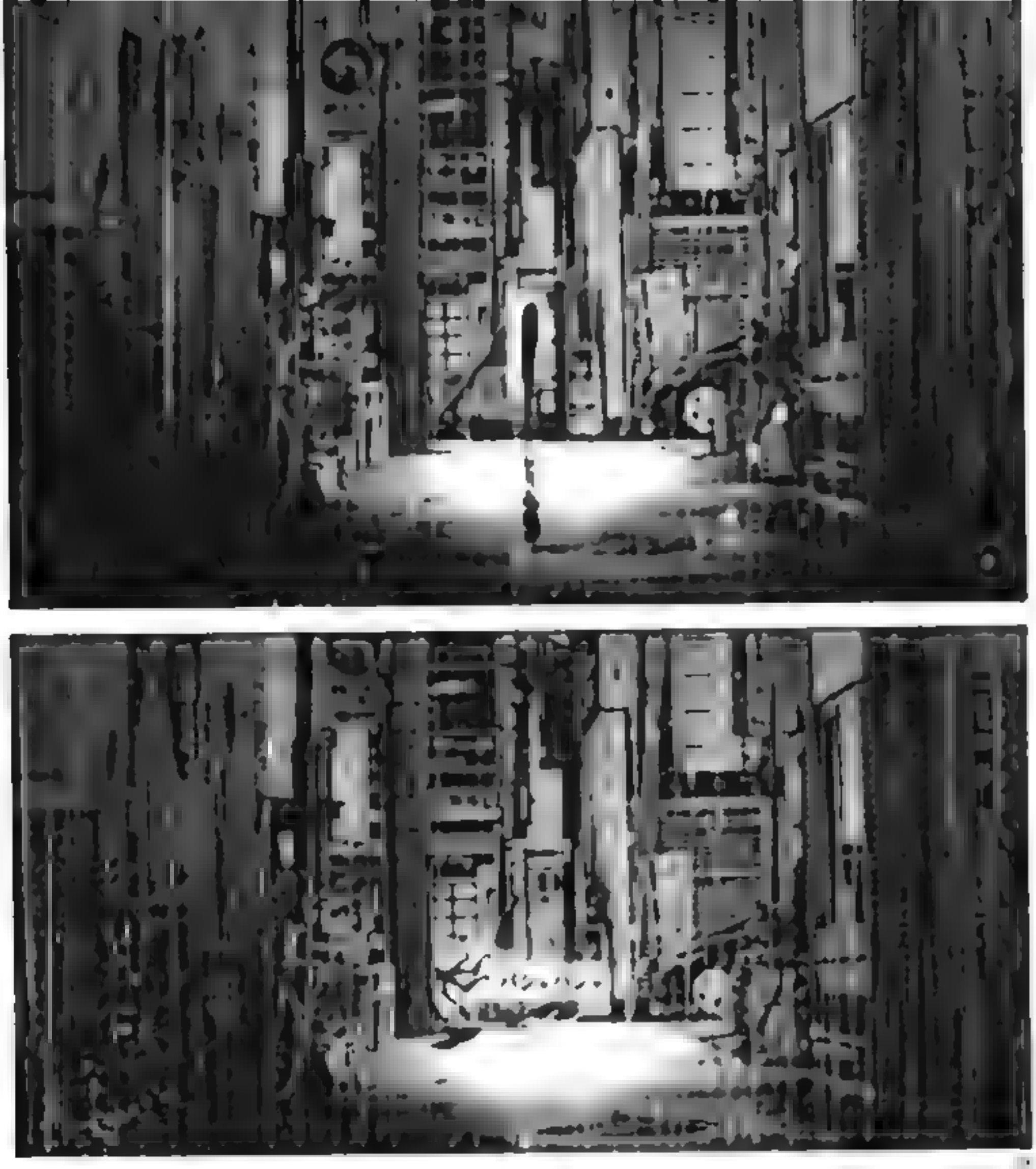
I'M SUCH AN IDIOT.

...YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW.

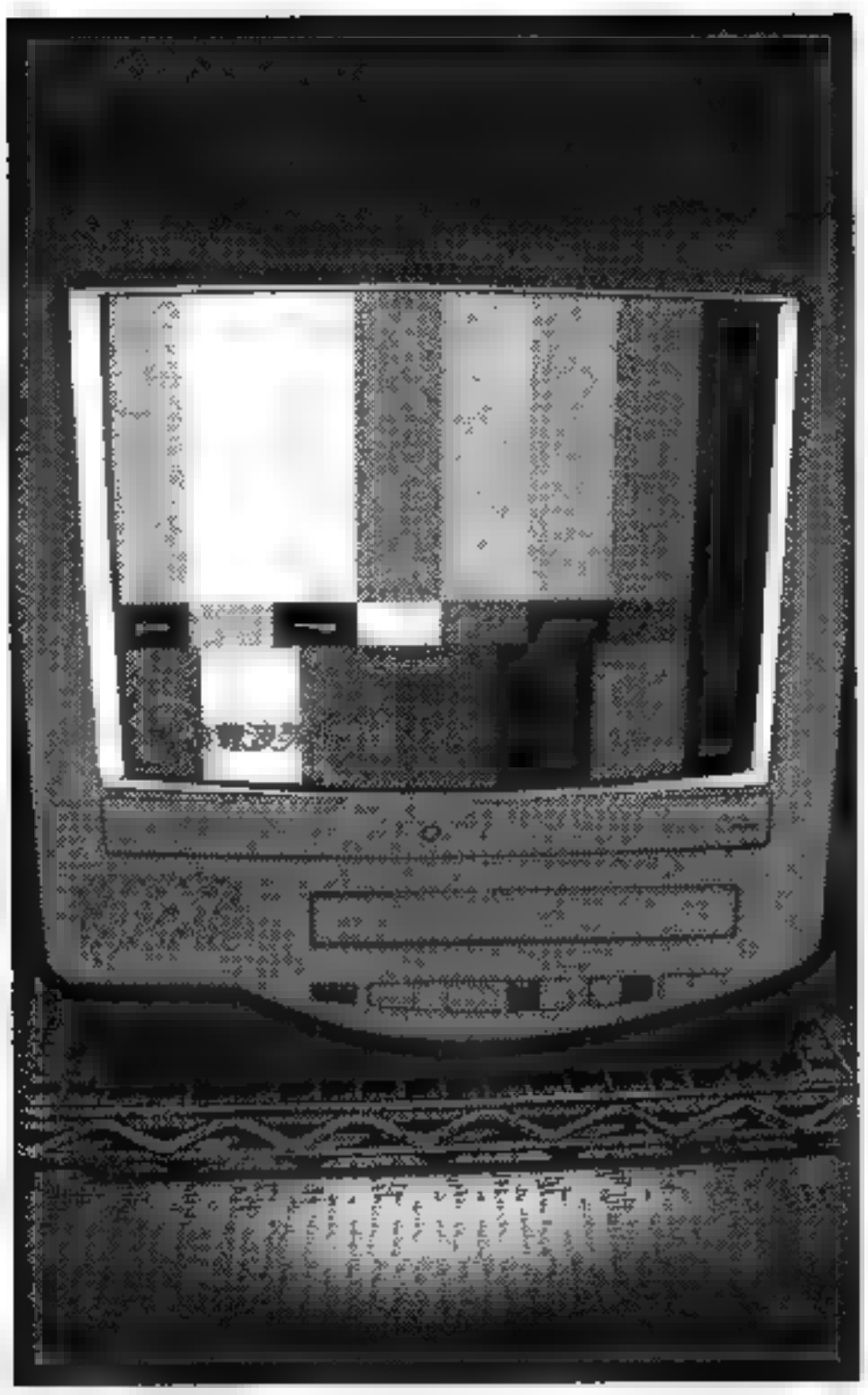
AH.

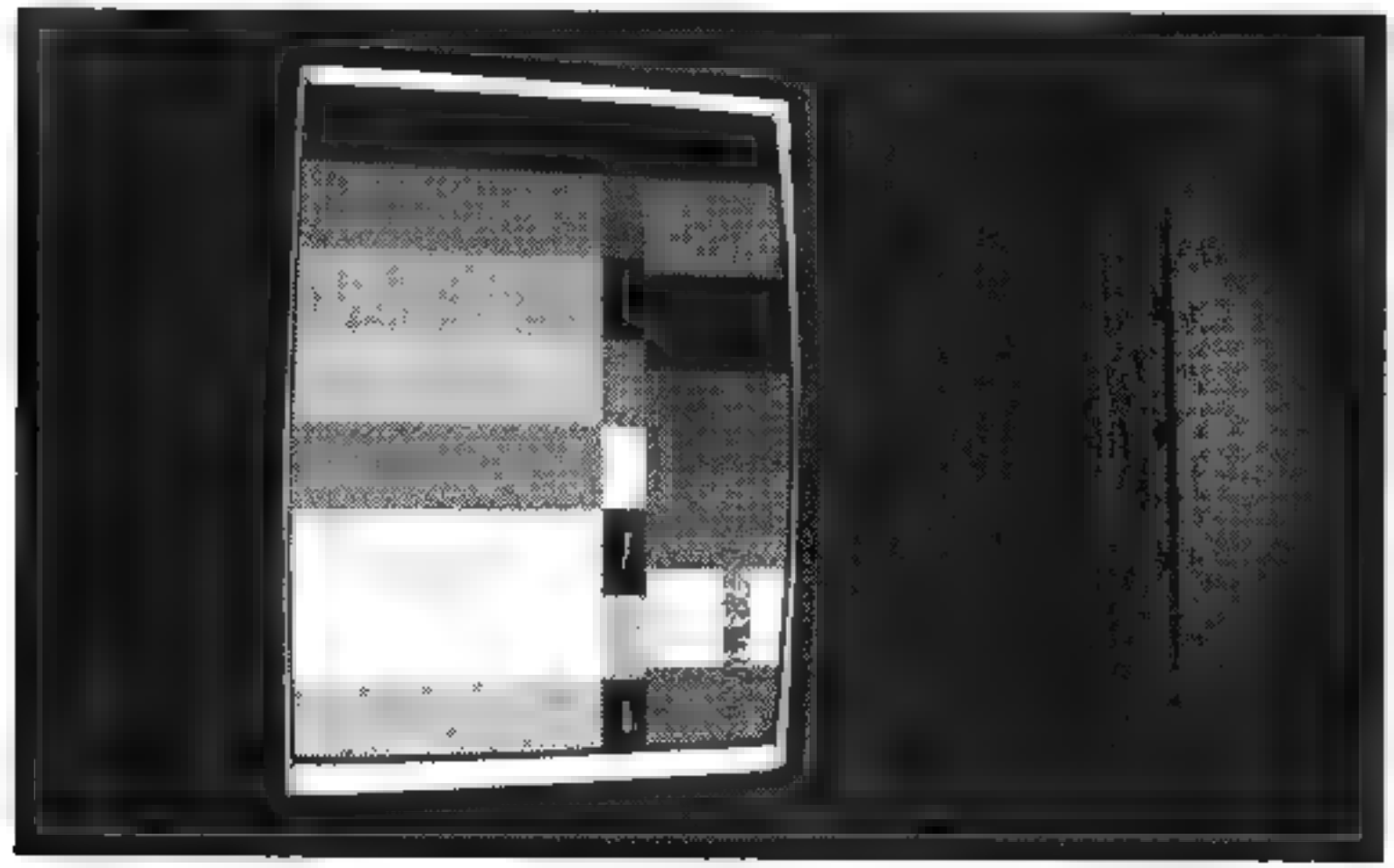


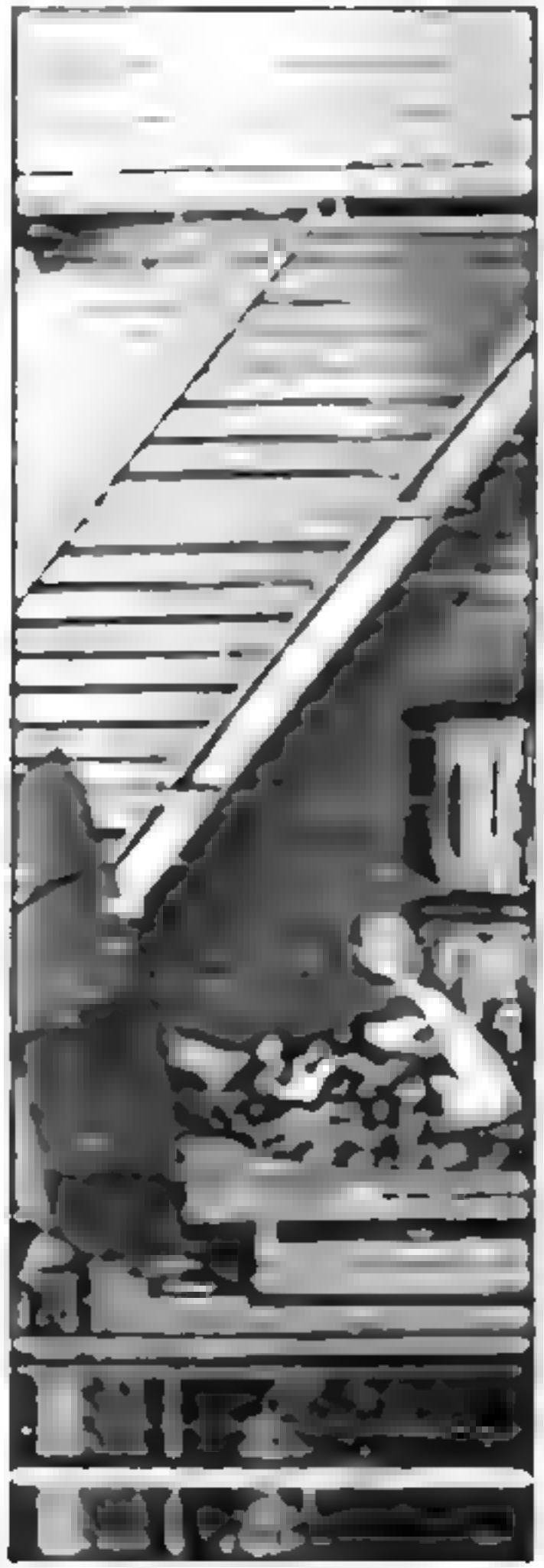



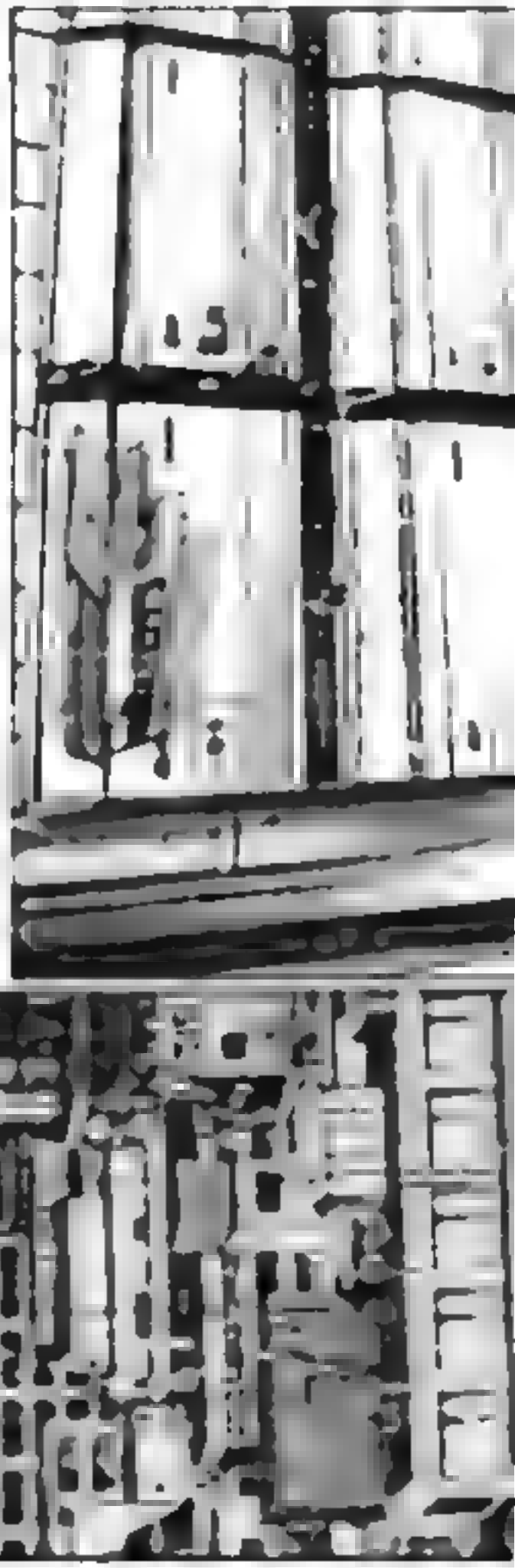


ARGGG
HHFF







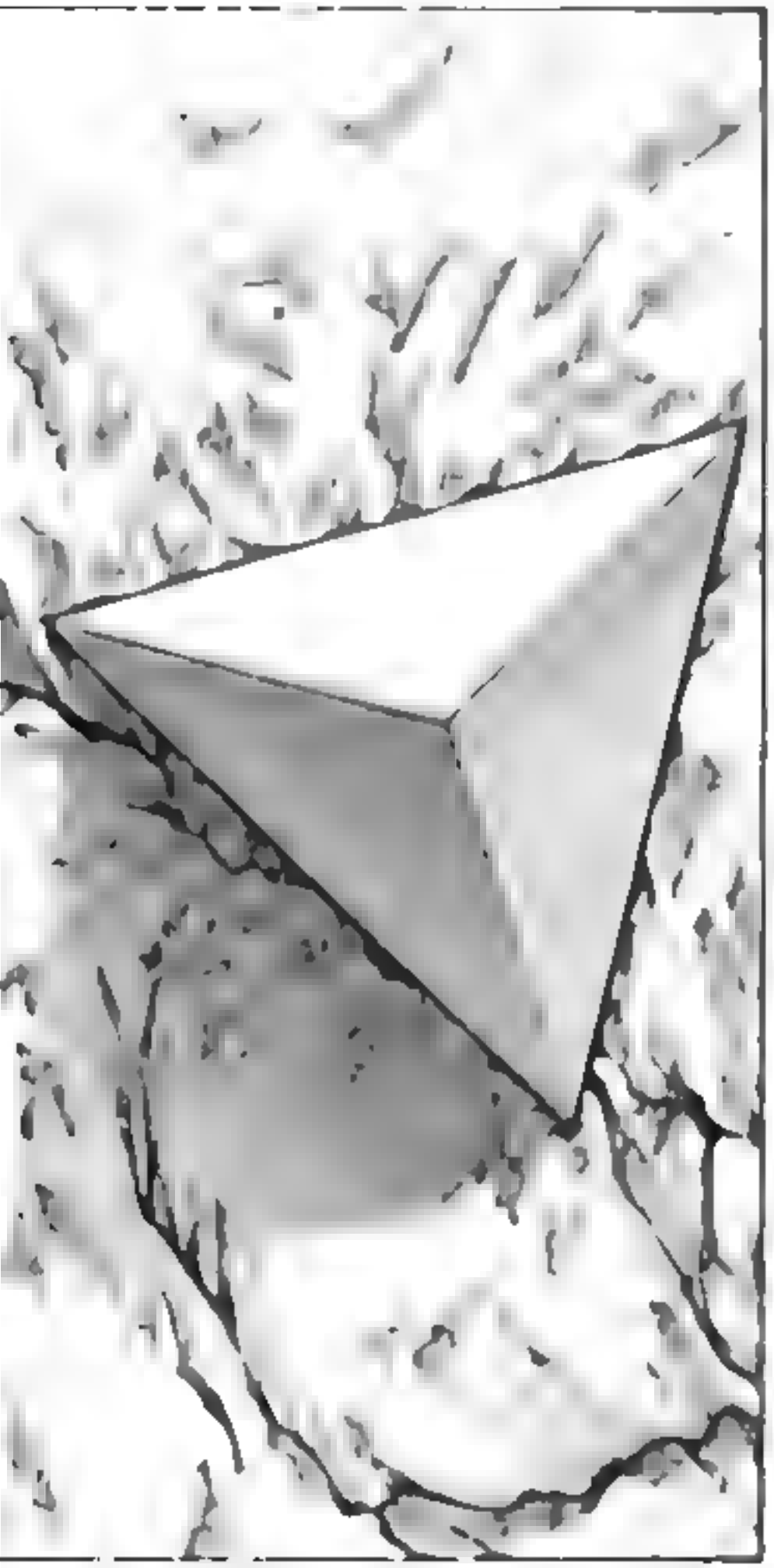


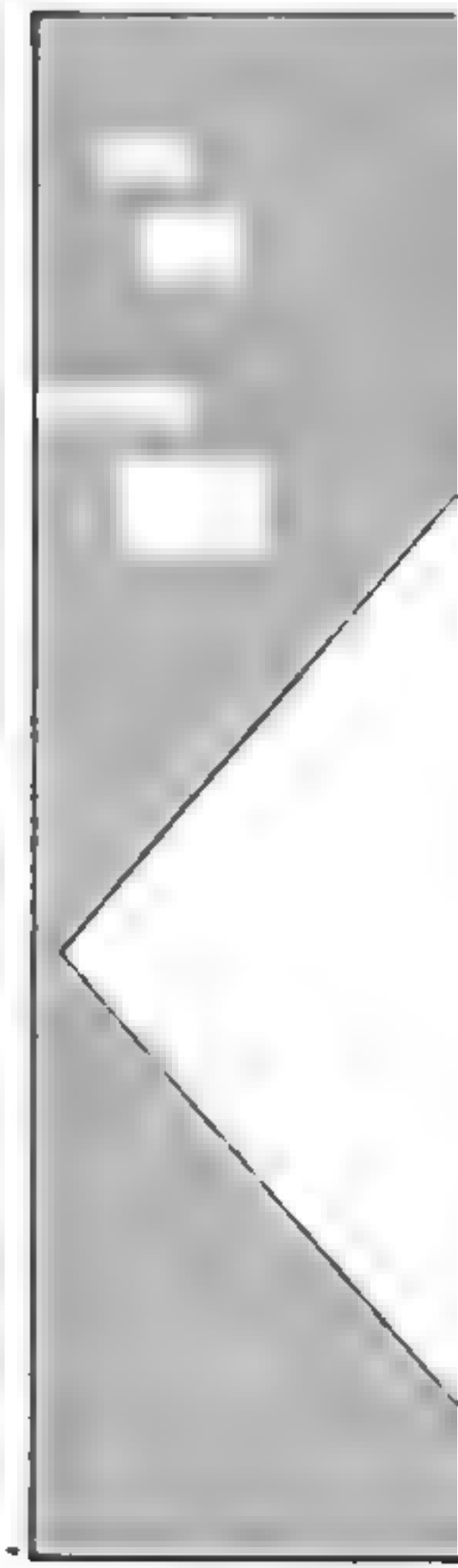
THE RAIN.

CONTINUED ON ENDLESSLY AS IF IT HAD FORGOTTEN HOW TO STOP

THE LOUDER THE RAIN SEEMED TO BECOME.

THE MORE PUNPUN THOUGHT ABOUT SHUTTING HIMSELF UP IN HIS 6 TATAMI ROOM.





PUNPUN IS...

FEELING JUST FINE AGAIN TODAY.

AH.

HELLO AGAIN.

...HMM, YOU SEEM RATHER TIRED, ONODERA.

I JUST WANTED TO SEE HOW YOU WERE FINDING THE PLACE.

AH NO,

I'M NOT HERE TO COLLECT RENT OR ANYTH NG LIKE THAT.

6

...ARE YOU FREE RIGHT NOW?

I'D LIKE TO TALK WITH YOU FOR A BIT IF POSSIBLE.

HM? OH, NO PARTICULAR REASON. JUST ASKING FROM THE CONCERNED HEART OF AN OLD MAN.

REALLY, NO PROBLEMS AT ALL? WELL THAT'S GREAT TO HEAR.

I'M THINKING OF ORDERING

ピンク

DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YOU BEFORE?

ABOUT THE OLD MAN WHO PASSED AWAY FROM ILLNESS IN YOUR ROOM, I MEAN.

WE HAD A BIT OF AN ARGUMENT EVER SINCE HE JOINED SOME FANATICAL CULT...

BUT IN ANY CASE, HE WAS SUCH A SIMPLE AND SERIOUS MAN TO THE POINT OF BEING QUITE SOCIALLY AWKWARD.

HE REMINDS ME A LITTLE OF YOU, ACTUALLY.

SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR EYES OR THE VERY ATMOS-PHERE ABOUT YOU...

I KNOW IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE FOR ANYTHING NOW BUT...

A PART OF ME WONDERS IF I SHOULD HAVE TRIED TO REACH OUT AND HELP HIM MORE...

IT'S JUST THAT HE'S BEEN STUCK IN MY MIND...

AH, MY BAD.

I CERTAINLY DIDN'T MEAN TO DEPRESS YOU WITH MY TALK OR ANYTHING.

I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO FORGET ABOUT,

THOSE LONELY EYES OF HIS

YES...

YOU DO HAVE THE SAME EYES AS HIM.

THAT LONELY BUT UNEX-PECTEDLY RESOLUTE STARE

YOU COULD EVEN SAY IT LOOKED ALMOST STUBBORN.

I CAN SEE THAT VERY SAME LOOK IN YOUR EYES...

A GAZE THAT PREVENTED HIS HEART FROM OPENING OUT TO ANYBODY...

OF COURSE, I WON'T PRESS YOU FOR ANY ANSWERS BUT...

OR WERE YOU THE ONE WHO BETRAYED THAT PERSON, I WONDER...

DID YOU PERHAPS HAPPEN TO BE CRUELLY BETRAYED BY SOMEONE,

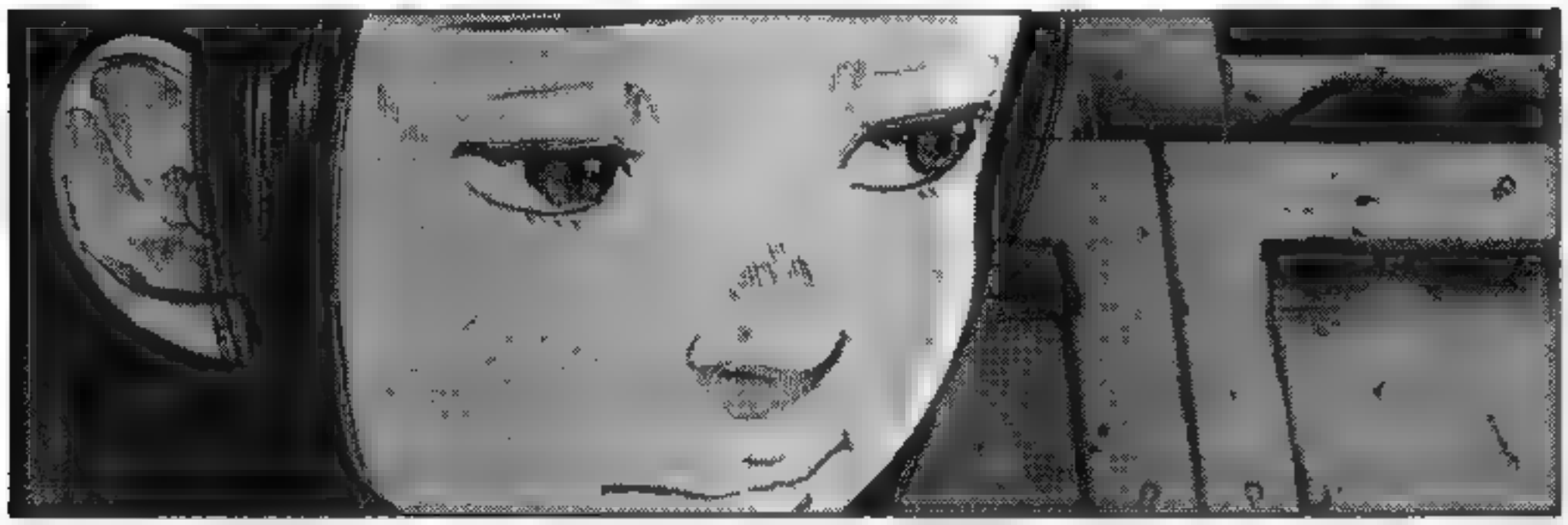
JUST WHY IS IT...?

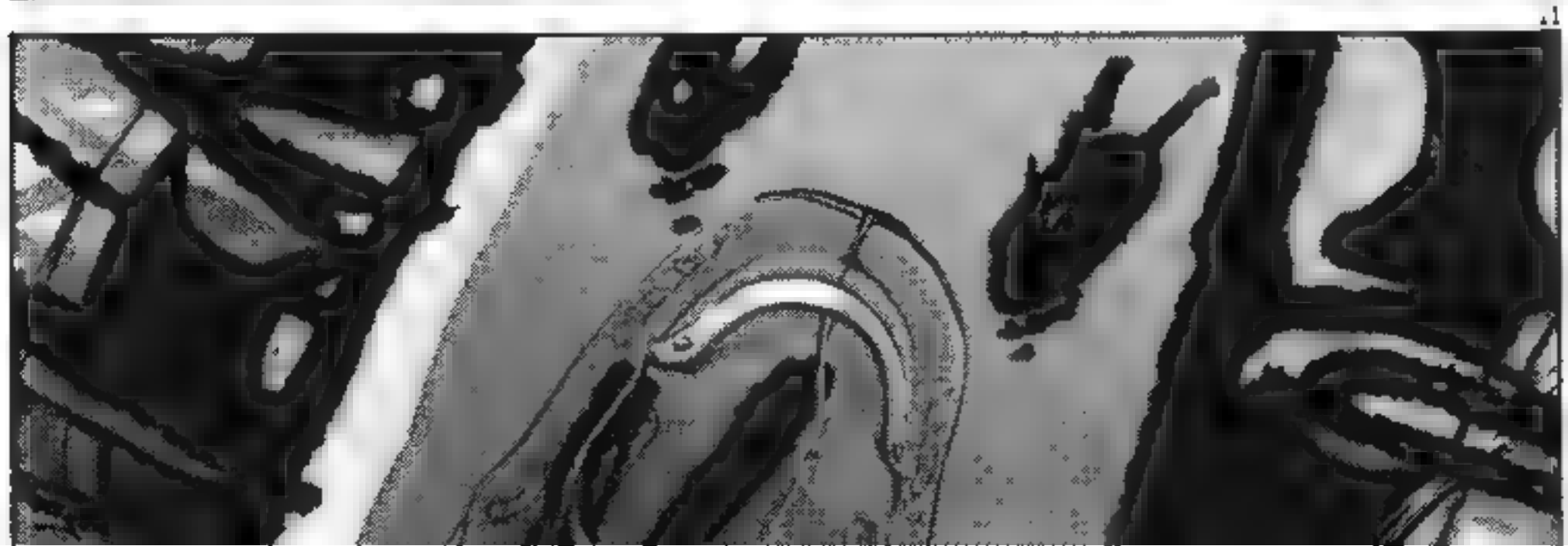
REALLY BEEN *THAT* HORRIBLE...?

HAVE THE PEOPLE THAT YOU'VE MET SO FAR IN YOUR LIFE,

AFTER ALL, ONCE YOU TURN OLD, YOU WON'T HAVE ANYTHING LEFT BUT YOUR MEMORIES..

YOU SHOULD TRY TO TRUST OTHERS A BIT MORE.





I CHOOSE TO
THEY OUTRIGHT

BY THE WAY ..

ARE YOU A LITTLE STRAPPED FOR CASH, ONODERA?

NO ONE WILL COME TO HELP YOU WHEN YOU MOST NEED IT, YOU KNOW?

IF YOU CONTINUE TO KEEP THAT VERY LOOK IN YOUR EYES,

AH!

THERE YOU GO AGAIN, TRYING TO GIVE A JOB TO A COMPLETE STRANGER!

BECAUSE IF IT'S A JOB YOU NEED

AND YOU THERE, BOY!

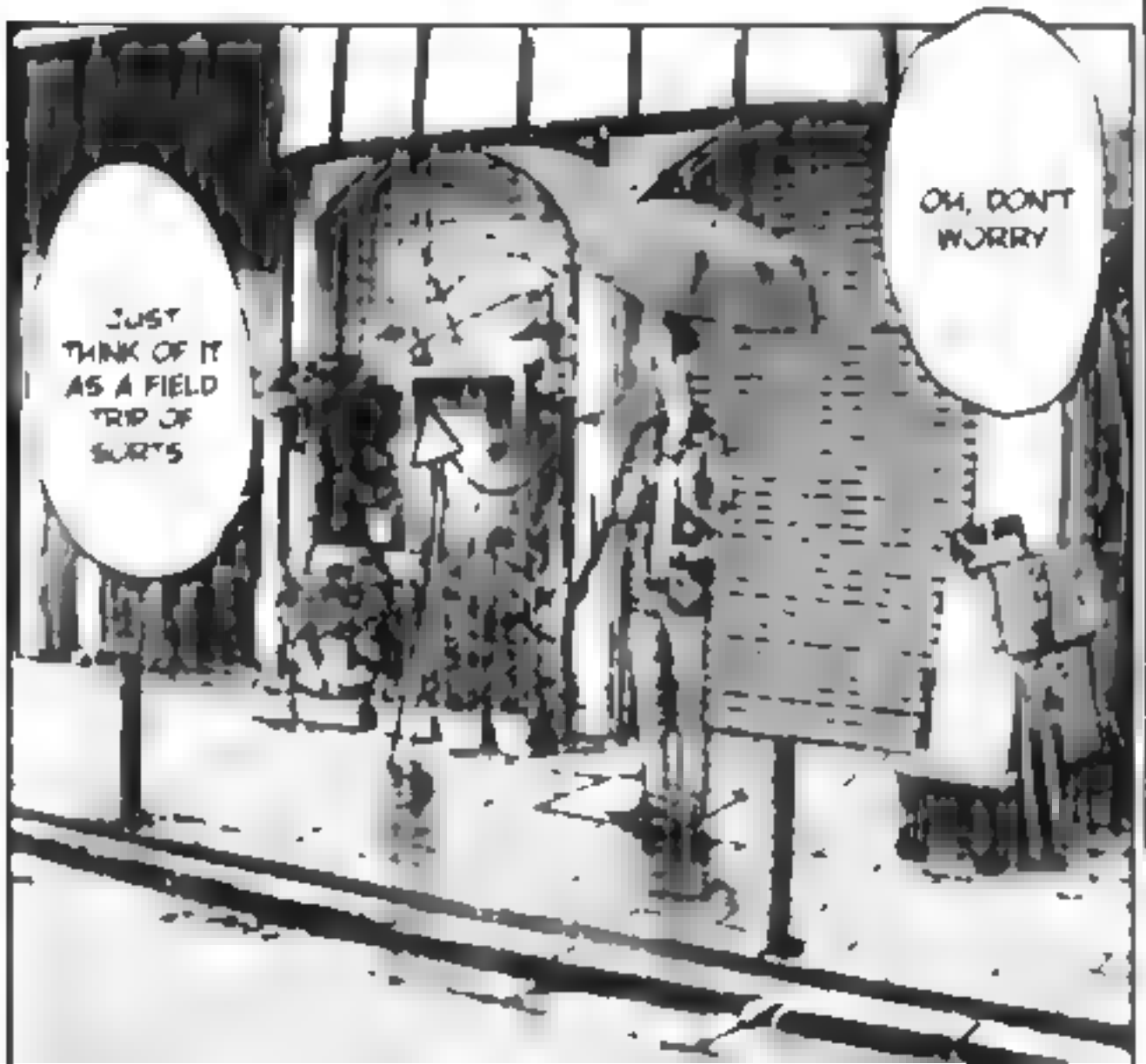
YOU'RE STILL YOUNG SO YOU SHOULD DO SOMETHING MORE PRODUCTIVE WITH YOUR TIME THAN IDLY CHATTING WITH AN OLD MAN!

YOU'RE TOO SOFT-HEARTED FOR YOUR OWN GOOD!

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU BEEN TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY LENDING MONEY OUT TO UNTRUSTWORTHY PEOPLE?

snack bar
isojiman

THAT GIRL IS MY DAUGHTER.
AND THOUGH SHE MUST RESEMBLE ME IN HER LOOKS HER PERSONALITY IS A BIT
I DISLIKE BEING AROUND CRABBY WOMEN


OH, DON'T WORRY
JUST THINK OF IT AS A FIELD TRIP OF SORTS

DO YOU LIKE DRINKING
WELL IF YOU FEEL LIKE DRINKING, JUST ASK
ALE MIXED WITH SOME HOT WATER?

I'M TOTALLY DRENCHED!

NO, NOT REALLY BUT I'M STILL DRINKING

YOU'VE BEEN JUST LAZING

IN AWHILE, MANAGER. HAS YOUR LIVER GOTTEN ANY BETTER?

AFTER ALL, IT'S EASY TO SCORE SOME FREE DRINKS AROUND HERE JUST BY TALKING IT UP WITH SOME PERVERTED

FEIGN DEPRES-SION AND LIE ON MY ASS ALL DAY NOW, CAN I?

GIVE ME A

AH, THAT'S ONODERA HE'S ONE OF MY TENANTS

WHO'S THE K D SITTING NEXT TO YOU? IS HE YOUR

MEET BEFORE SOMEWHERE?

DEFINITELY SURE I'VE SEEN YOU SOME-WHERE BEFORE...

MNN...

I'M,

I REMEM-BERED!

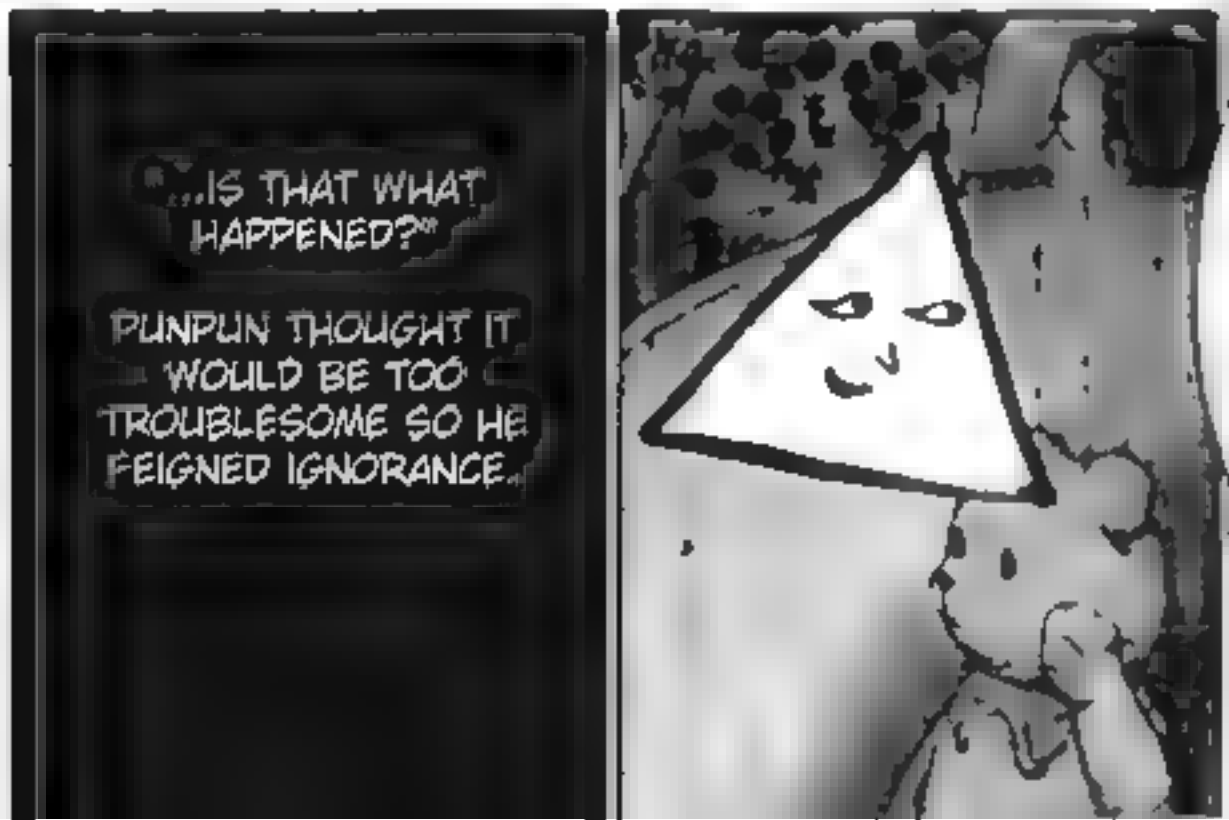
AH!

YOU'RE THAT BOY WHO CAME WITH AZUSA TO SEE THE ART EXHIBIT, AREN'T YOU!?

WHEN WAS IT AGAIN ...?

I THINK I WAS 19 BACK THEN SO.. 3 YEARS AGO?

COME ON! DON'T YOU REMEMBER KANE AZUSA?
IT WAS EVEN RAINING THAT DAY JUST LIKE TODAY!


"...IS THAT WHAT HAPPENED?"
PUNPUN THOUGHT IT WOULD BE TOO TROUBLESOME SO HE FEIGNED IGNORANCE.

AHH... LOOKS LIKE I'VE BEEN MESMERIZED BY YOUR BEAUTY AGAIN AND GOTTEN MYSELF DRUNK, MAMA

OH PLEASE!

I REMEMBER DRINKING MYSELF TO DEATH ON THE FIRST NIGHT I MET YOU AS WE...

YEAH, YEAH! I'M STARTING TO REMEMBER MORE CLEARLY NOW!

YOU HAD YOUR HAIR GELLED UP AND WAS WEARING THIS BRAND-NAME T-SHIRT

PERSONALLY I THOUGHT YOU LOOKED LIKE QUITE THE EAGER BEAVER

TEREN TE TE TE N

CHARA CHA CHARA CHA RA CHACHA

SUASUADO HEROINA HERE INEXPERIENCED AS I MAY BE ALLOW ME TO SING YOU ALL A SONG

AND THAT SONG IS... IZAKAYA!

MAMA!

AZUSA...?

I [illegible] KANIE LEFT ME AFTER FINDING EMPLOYMENT, I HAVEN'T REALLY [illegible]

I [illegible] IN UNIVERSITY NOW AND LIVING ALONE.

OH, BY KANIE I MEAN AZUSA'S FAT OLDER SISTER WHO WEARS GLASSES.

Please have yourself a drink

SINCE SHE WAS PREVIOUSLY A VIRGIN, SHE'S [illegible]

[illegible] BAD

[illegible]

A doub[illegible] bourb[illegible] for m[illegible]

Sure, I won't hesitate

nor ask about your life story

I ain't so tactless as to ask for your name.

sitting beside each other at a pub~

That's right, we just happen to be

SEEMS THAT THINGS DIDN'T WORK OUT TOO WELL BETWEEN YOU TWO AFTER THAT DAY

A REAL COUPLE OF VIRGINS IF I EVER SAW ONE

GUYS WHO'RE VIRGINS ARE USUALLY SO ANNOYING BECAUSE THEY'RE ALL ABOUT ME ME ME

THEY THINK THEY'RE PRETTY MUCH RIGHT ALL THE TIME

In a shabby dingy izakaya,

with no pictures, no flowers, no songs, nor fancy words~

BUT YOU KNOW, AZUSA WAS PRETTY DEPRESSED AFTER THAT DAY...

I THINK SHE REALLY LIKED YOU.

WHAT'D YOU EVEN DO TO BUM HER OUT LIKE THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE?

♥ It's fine, I'll just sit right here and drink the time away until the rain stops~

♠ It's raining in case you're thinking of going outside. I just heard the pitter-patter of drizzle a little while ago.

♥ You just go on home~

♥ That don't bother me none.

♠ Then shall I accompany you until morning?

I've known some bad women in the past.

with no pictures,
no flowers,
no songs nor
fancy words~

AH.

SORRY

YOU'RE NOT STILL HUNG UP OVER AZUSA, ARE YOU?

"NO, I'M NOT HUNG UP OVER HER OR ANYTHING BUT YOUR WAY OF SPEAKING SO BLUNTLY IS MAKING ME UNCOMFORTABLE."

dingy izakaya~

In a shabby

"I'M SORRY BUT I THINK I'LL LEAVE NOW."

WAIT! JUST WAIT A SECOND!

WHA-

HEY.

BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE THAT I'VE BEEN WANTING TO SAY TO YOU FOR THE LONGEST TIME!

WELL...

YOU TECHNICALLY DIDN'T COMMENT ON MY PAINTING

MY PAINTING AND YOU WENT AND ENDED UP WRITING A WHOLE BUTTLOAD OF STUFF!

BUT IN ANY

ABOUT THAT STORY

IT WAS SET ON SOME ALIEN PLANET BUT THAT WAS ACTUALLY A STORY OF YOUR OWN CHILDHOOD WASN'T IT?

THE STORY COULD'VE BEEN A BIT MORE POLISHED,

BUT I THOUGHT IT WAS PRETTY INTERESTING.

I COULD JUST VIVIDLY PICTURE YOUR STORY'S SCENES.

YOU SEE, I'M A PICTURE BOOK ILLUSTRATOR AND I PARTICIPATE IN COMPETITIONS AND STUFF

IF IT'S ALRIGHT WITH YOU,

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTINUE WRITING THAT STORY AS AN ORIGINAL WORK?

I WANT TO BUY YOUR TALENTS, ONODERA.

HM? YOU WANT TO
WELL, THIS
DRINK IT.

"...YOU'RE BETTER OFF NOT INVOLVING YOURSELF WITH SOMEONE LIKE ME, YOU KNOW."

"DON'T WORRY, I'M NOT DRUNK AT ALL. BY THE WAY, WOULD IT BE ALRIGHT FOR ME TO TOUCH YOUR BREASTS?"

HUH?

WHAT WAS THAT?

CAN'T UNDERSTAND YOUR SLURRING!

"IT'S NOT LIKE I HATE MIMURA OR ANYHTING BUT I'VE ONCE WISHED BEFORE THAT IF HE FOUND HIMSELF A GIRLFRIEND, SHE'D EITHER BE A FATASS OR AN IMAGINARY ONE. BUT PLEASE KEEP THIS A SECRET FROM HIM, ALRIGHT?"

"THAT STORY WAS NOTHING BUT A FLUKE SO I'M ONLY GOING TO GET COCKY IF YOU TRY TO COMPLIMENT ME. ALSO, I'M NOT A VIRGIN ANYMORE SO PLEASE DON'T TREAT ME LIKE AN IDIOT, OKAY?"

BUT YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND ALL MY SUBTELTIES, ONO-D...

THE REAL FOE IS ALWAYS YOUR OWN SELF

I CAN'T FIND HER NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY LOOKING.

I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO DO.

BUT I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO KEEP TRYING.

SO I'M TELLING YOU, IT'S DANGEROUS TO GET YOURSELF INVOLVED WITH ME...

I'M ACTUALLY THE FAMILIAR OF GELDARK, THE GOD OF HELL.

NO, THAT'S JUST A LIE.

MIMURA?

WHO'S MIMURA?

HE'S COMPLETELY WASTED!

MANAGER, DO YOU KNOW WHERE THIS KID LIVES?

HELLO?

OZOOOUU<...

LIE DOWN OVER THERE.

CAN YOU HEAR ME?

PRETENDING TO BE A CRAZY PERSON IS STRANGELY QUITE CALMING.

I'M THE WORST, AREN'T I!? HAHAHA!

HEY!

AH...

IT'S AIKO.

SHE'S SO FAR AWAY...

AIKO'S ALWAYS A LITTLE FAR AWAY FROM ME.

HEY!

MAYBE I'VE BEEN CURSED BY YOU.

HEY, AIKO.

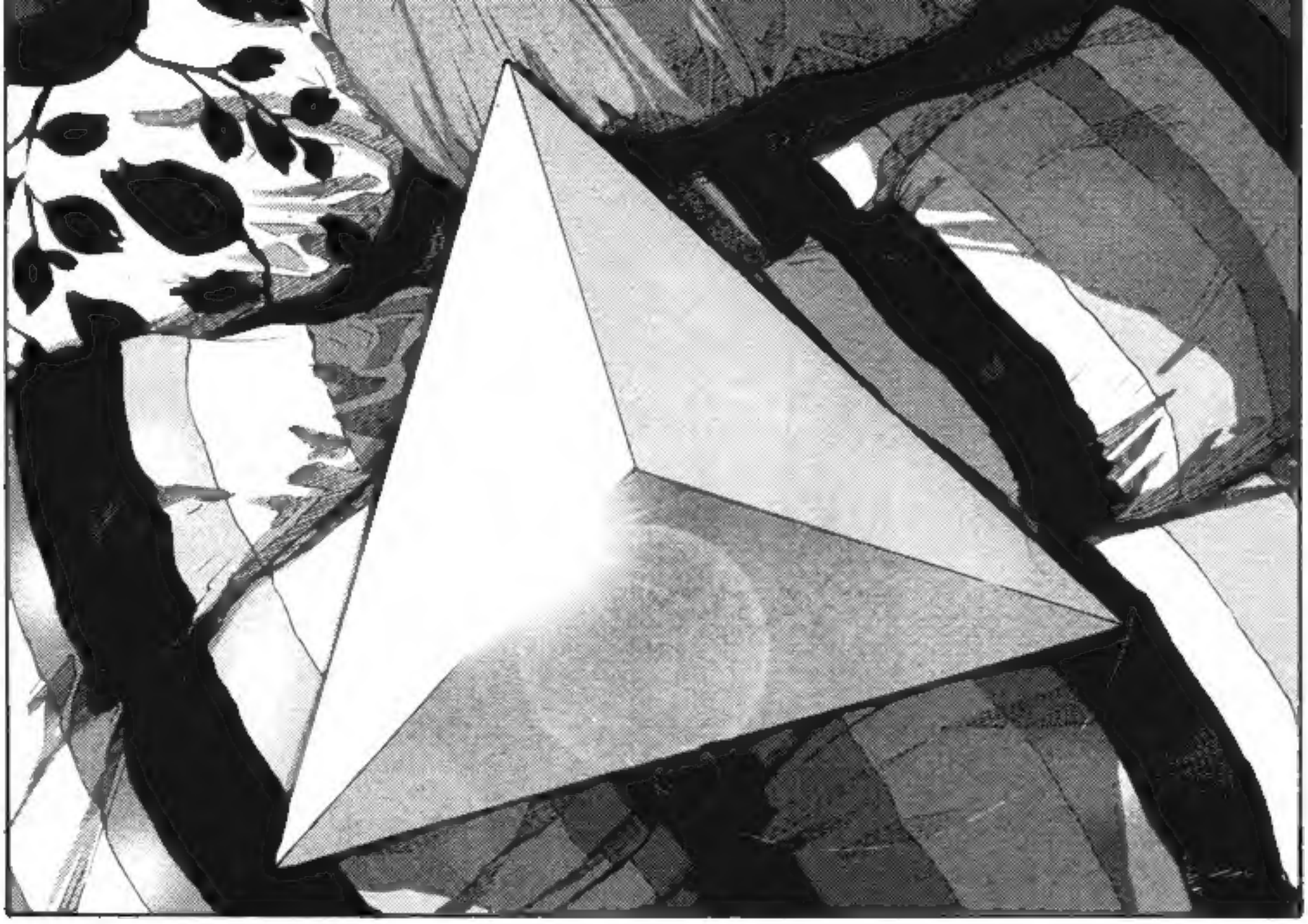
AS LONG AS YOU'RE NOT JUST SOME DREAM OR ILLUSION OF MINE.

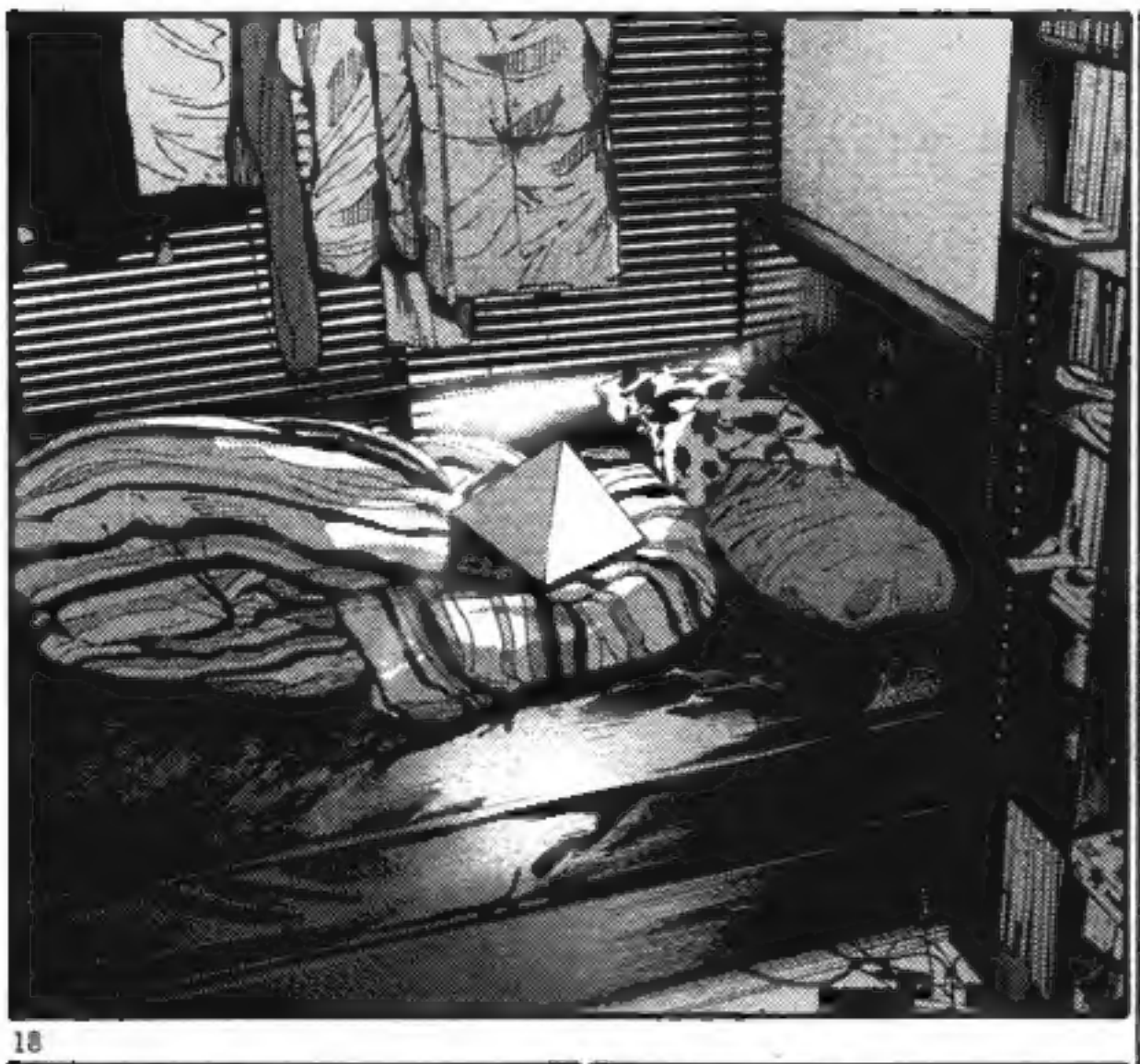
...PLEASE HELP ME, AIKO.

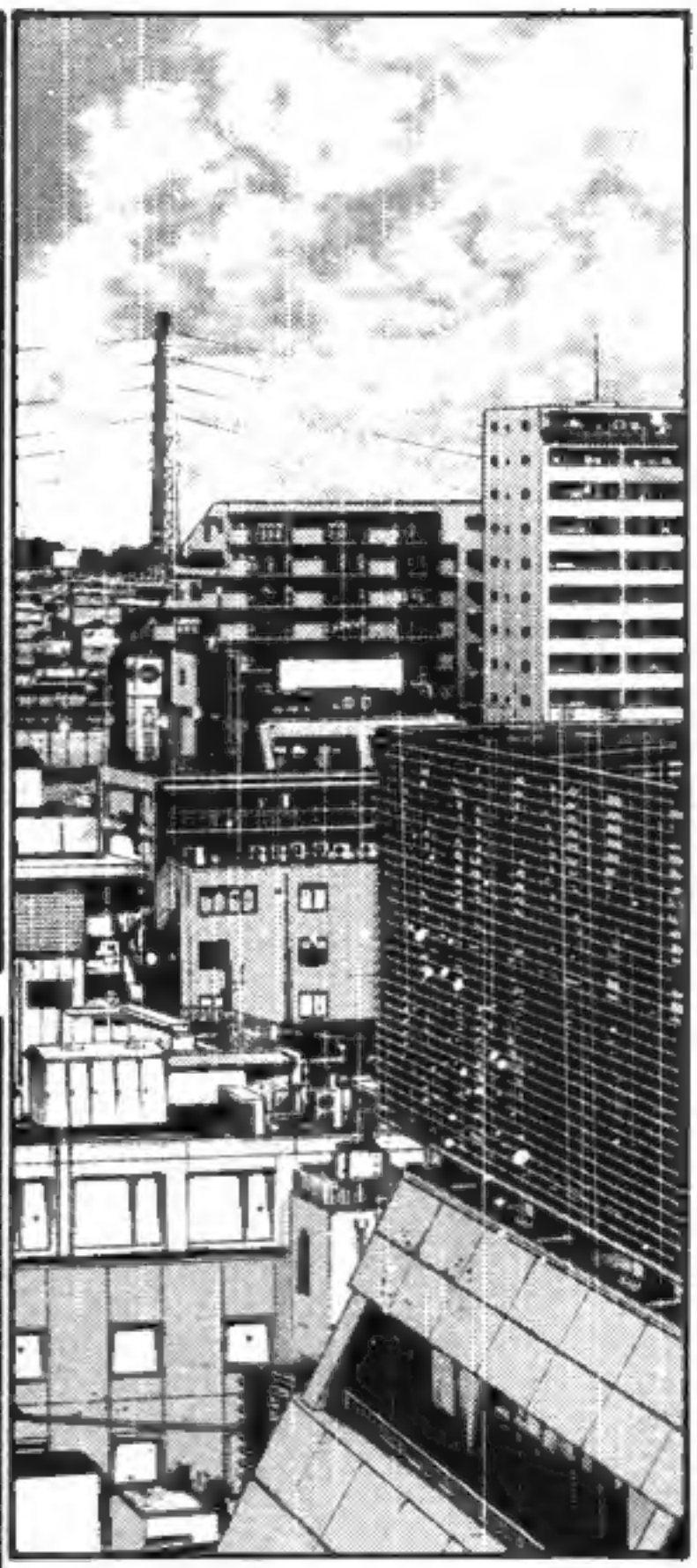
I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT I JUST CAN'T LIKE OTHER PEOPLE NORMALLY ANYMORE.

PUNPUN, IF YOU EVER BETRAY ME AGAIN...

I'LL KILL YOU.







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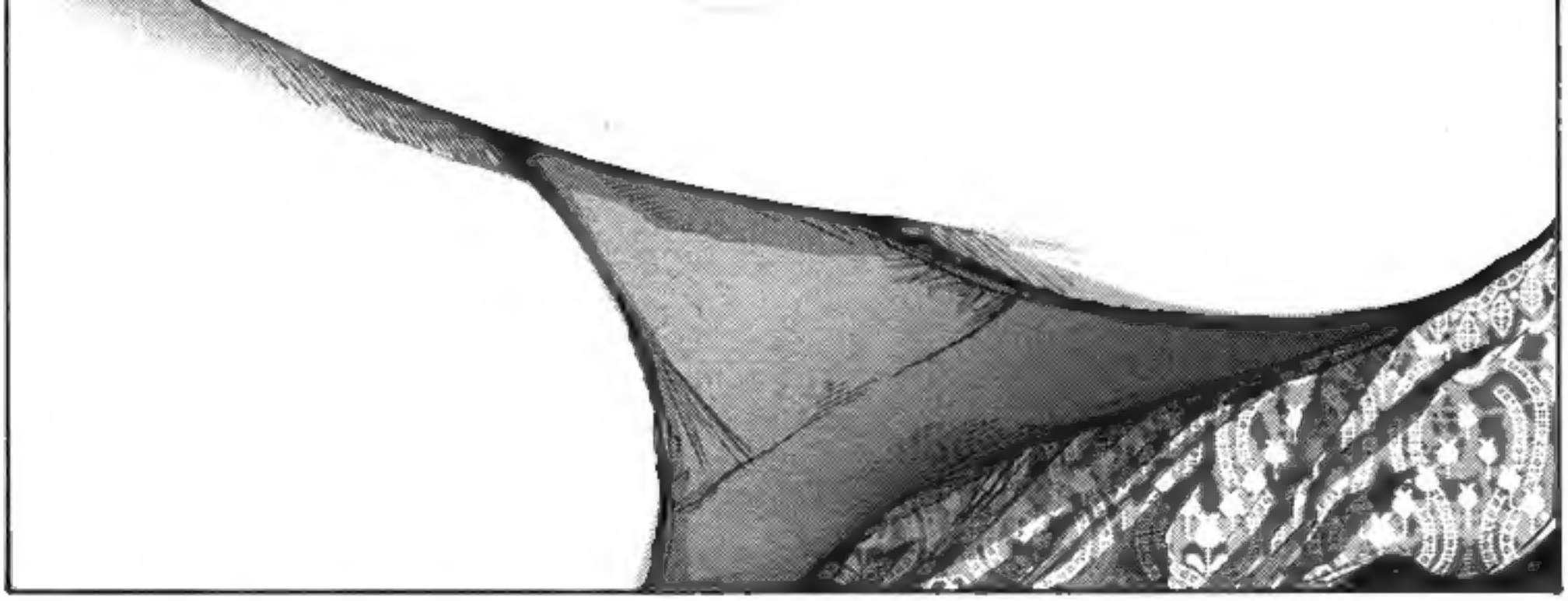
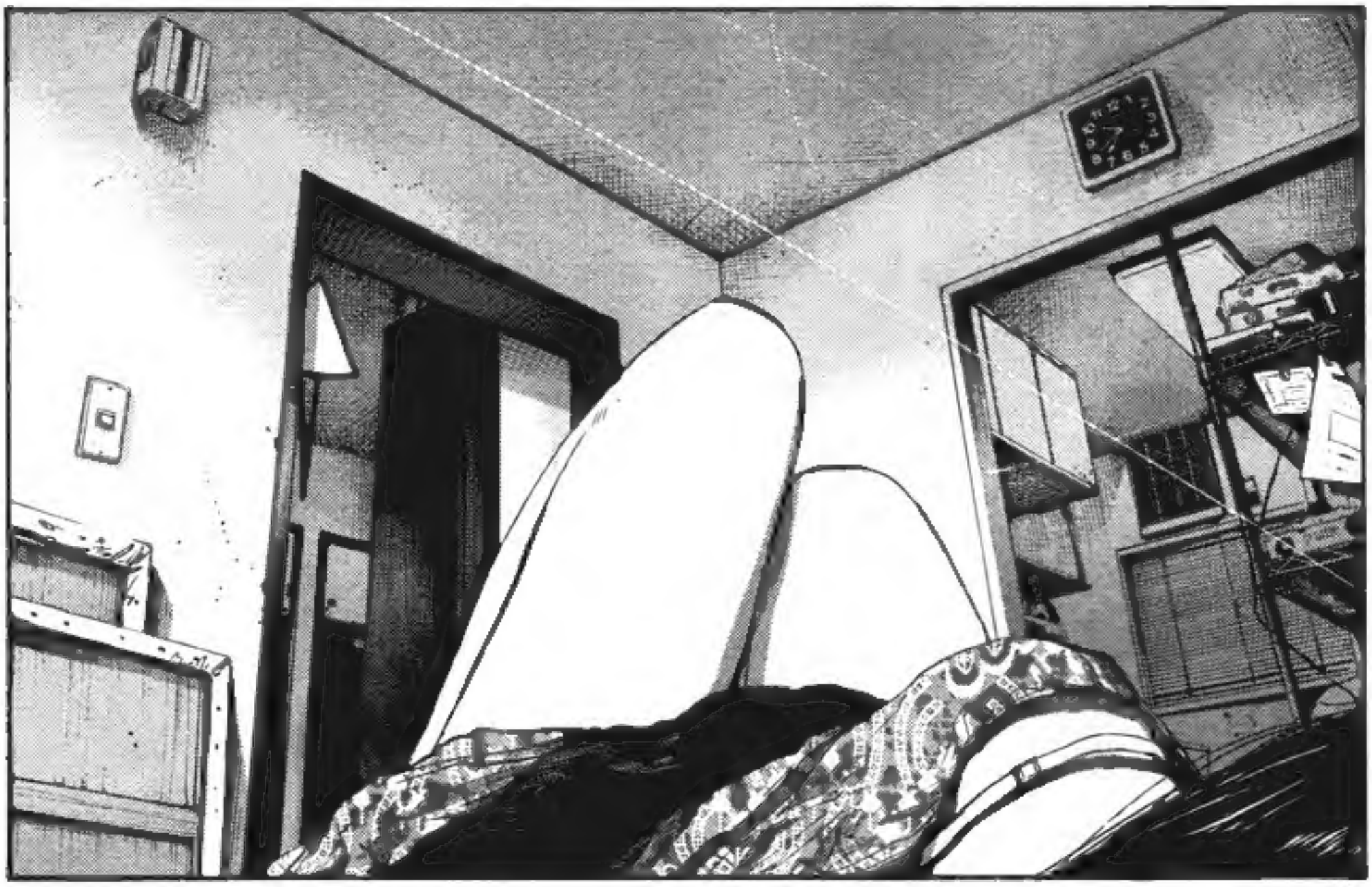
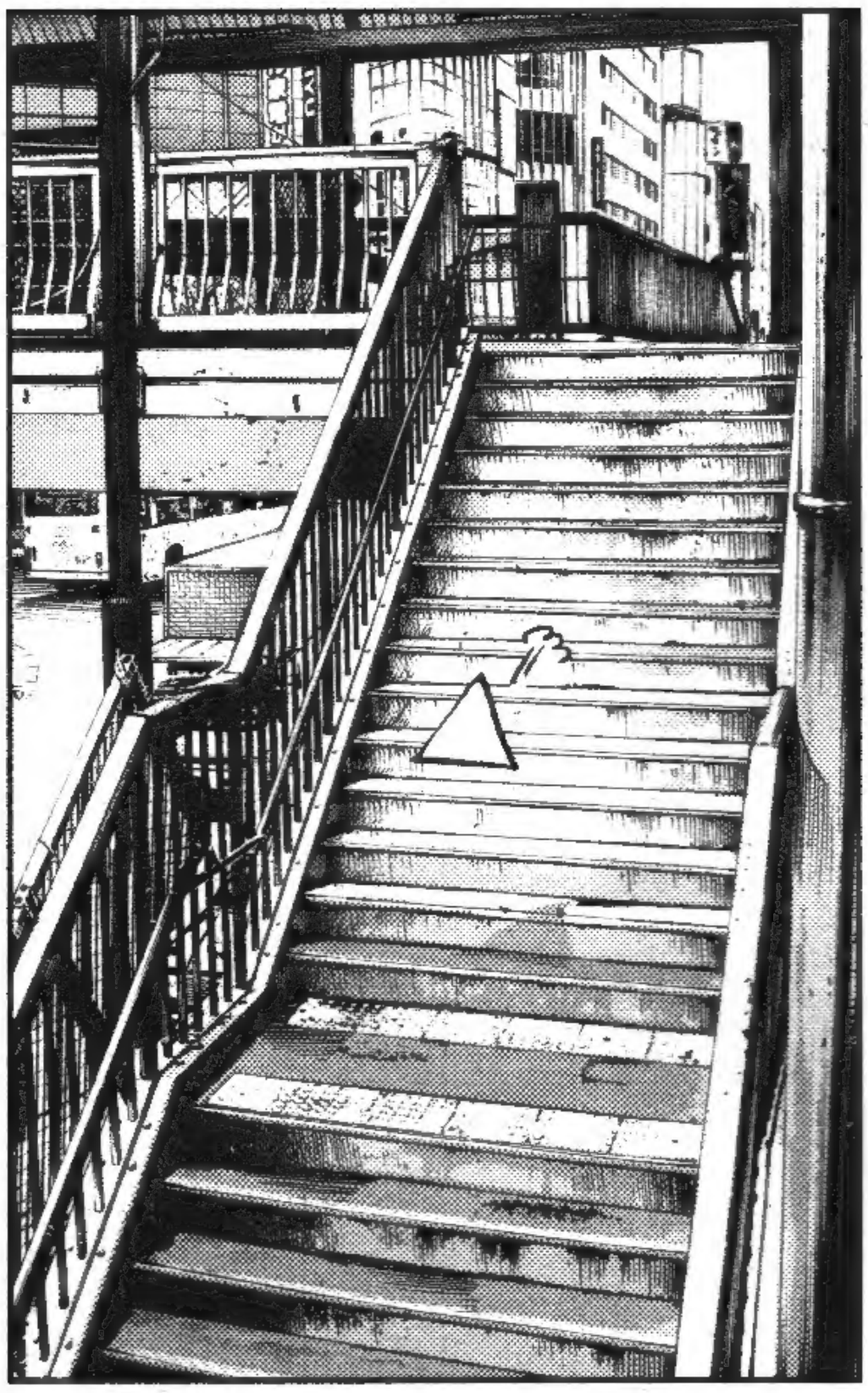




HUH?

WHA?



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